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Performing Arts Issue

NEW STATESMAN

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The Rise of the Dutch Republic

A double-Dutch definition of a republic might be one where the Queen will abdicate if the Prince is prosecuted for proven offences of graft and corruption. The five-party Centre-Left government in Holland is determined to resist left-wing demands for the course of justice to be pursued; it may yet find that the Dutch people prize the idea of legal consistency more than they do Queen Juliana. Even in Japan, where there has always been more tolerance for Lockheed-type 'interfaces' between business and politics, Mr Miki has found the wisest strategy the toughest one, and shown little in the way of fear or favour. Both these contrasts bode ill for the Dutch government, and for supporters of monarchy in general. Since the war European crowned heads have not fared especially well. Apart from the forlorn pretenders, who used to shelter at Estoril under Salazar's protection, we have seen the ease with which Kings Constantine and Juan Carlos have been co-opted by enemies of democracy who regard monarchy as a cloak to be donned in emergency.

Nor was Prince Bernhard a political innocent. Like most of Lockheed's recipients, he belonged to the hard right and was never happier than when hosting a top-level Bilderberg forum of rich anti-communists. Lockheed money was never distributed just to secure contracts by unfair competition. It went to the political forces, in each country, which were most likely to guarantee 'stability' and least likely to suffer from democratic or legal scruples. It is the last aspect which should cause the real concern, and which ought to give the greatest impetus to the demand for full disclosure of the facts. Dr Kissinger does not muzzle the Church Committee because he blushes for private peccadilloes. He does so because his waning band of international admirers is threatened and wishes to hide from the light.

Since Mr Ernest Hauser proved to be a reliable witness in the case of Prince Bernhard, he deserves something better than *Daily Telegraph* character assassination for his allegation that the right-wing Bavarian cohorts of Franz-Josef Strauss also benefited from Lockheed slush-funds. Given that Herr Strauss, who admits to a close friendship with Mr Hauser until recently, is now being mooted as the Christian Democrats' idea of West Germany's next Finance Minister, the German electorate are surely entitled to know the score. His long record as an authoritarian and paranoid politician is dubious enough; his mastery of his own party's funds scarcely qualifies him to control the finances of the Federal Republic.

In Italy, too, there are probably more revelations to come. Contrary to the mythical impression created about their attitude to politics, Italian voters do care about corruption and about the authoritarian (sometimes near-fascist) figures who flourish by it. They are prepared to vote in large numbers to get rid of such people. And yet even after two major election campaigns in two years they have not been told the full truth about which of their politicians are straight.

When Henry Kissinger's political obituary is written – which may not be very far into the future – there will be many short-term and short-sighted acts and policies on the indictment. Some of these will be put in evidence even by those who agree with him about the world. One of them will certainly be his determination to shelter non-American politicians caught up in American scandals. One of the witnesses before the Church Committee told the Senator that he had brought down more governments than anybody since Lenin. Although hyperbolic, this remark gave an impression of the scale of the Lockheed affair. It is a pity that, so far, the Dutch have decided to postpone the evil day of reckoning. But in doing so they have not necessarily written the end of the script. It is still open to Jimmy Carter to announce that, if elected, he will authorise publication of the Lockheed inquiries. Nothing could provide a better test of his commitment against the back-room big boys of Washington, or of his party's pledge for greater openness in foreign policy. Neither objective will be attainable while multinationals are permitted to have a secret foreign policy of their own.

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Spotlight on Politics

Christopher Hitchens

The Reign of Piety and Iron

Ideologically, the Conservative Party is growing to resemble the Republican Party more and more every week. The bookshelf or magazine rack of a New Rightist tends to boast works by Milton Friedman or back-numbers of William Buckley's *National Review* and, though connoisseurs have the Vienna school of Hayek and Mises to console them, it is the Chicago school of tough-minded free enterprise that really sets the pace these days. None of this is to slight the Institute of Economic Affairs or its rather more political younger brother, the Centre for Policy Studies, set up by Thatcher and Joseph and denounced for duplicity by Edward Heath. One of the clearest signs of their new thinking, and of its Friedmanite sources, can be detected in attitudes to unemployment and the (not at first sight obviously) related question of council housing.

Last week the *Daily Telegraph* illustrated the general conversion by carrying a leader on unemployment entitled 'One-and-a-half million'. In a way, this was a strange heading for the piece, since the Centre for Policy Studies has devoted a great deal of time to arguing that real unemployment is much lower than the published and publicised figures suggest. (The sudden usefulness of this line of research to Michael Foot and James Callaghan only goes some way to show how splendidly the counter-revolution is getting on. Or, to put it another way, the only rebuttal of the CPS figures would involve saying 'But, you fools, under Labour unemployment is *much* higher than that.') Joseph's researchers shadow the Government's statistics and recommend deducting three groups from the total. The first, 'those unsuited to regular full-time work', amounts to some quarter of a million and is defined as 'the socially disadvantaged, the elderly and those who find it extremely difficult to adapt to the conditions of working life'. The Department of Employment, from whose research this figure was calculated, say that it is specious.

This is because a survey had found 30 per cent of unemployed people keen to find work but enjoying little prospect of doing so, and another 30 per cent with little prospect and perhaps even less enthusiasm. The CPS aggregate of these percentages is deceptive because, as the Department points out, in a memorable phrase for our times:

> Whether long durations of unemployment sap enthusiasm, or those who are somewhat unenthusiastic tend to have long periods of unemployment, cannot be decided from the survey.

Probably not. It is time that much more public money was spent to decipher the reciprocal relationship between unemployment and lack of enthusiasm. We cannot for long persist in this ignorance. At least there are plenty of potential volunteers. I ought to say here that if anybody thinks I could have worked these conclusions out without the help of Peter Kellner of the *Sunday Times*, they are wrong.

The second category which Joseph's watchdogs would like to excise from the total is 'people between jobs'. They define these people as 'frictionally unemployed' on the grounds that however many jobs there are, many people will wish to change employment and may spend a few weeks on the register while doing so. That is self-evidently true, but it does not have the implications that the CPS would like us to observe. Some 271,000 people were on the unemployed register for four weeks or less last October. But to deduct them all is to overlook the Department of Employment when it says that the four-week register includes many people who *will be* on it for more than one month. After that, it would be beginning to look very much more than frictional to those at the sharp end.

In the same month of 1975 the CPS wanted to exclude 50,000 'pensioners not seeking work'. This is a bit nearer the mark, since many old people with occupational pensions remain on the register until they are 65 in order to be excused their national insurance contributions. The last survey of this group (whose conclusions ought to be widely known) was in June 1973. It found that only one third of them had occupational pensions of more than £20 per week from their former employers, and that a quarter were receiving less than £5. These and related circumstances mean that the CPS figure for pensioners not seeking work is about twice as large as it ought to be.

Given the extreme peculiarity of this statistical enterprise (not much superior to Enoch Powell's duelling with the Home Office) it is worth asking why the Right wishes to underplay the unemployment total. The same *Telegraph* leader offers a clue. Having asserted that much of today's unemployment is produced by government action designed to woo union support and stroke the egos of 'middle-class parliamentarians' (odd how 'middle-class' is so seldom used as a term of abuse in the *Telegraph* – it only becomes opprobrious when coupled with 'socialist') the leader continues:

> The earnings-related unemployment benefits, social security payments and redundancy payments *have long reduced the need for people to get off the dole queues in a hurry . . .* Under the Employment Protection Act, for instance, a woman who takes maternity leave can reclaim her job within 29 weeks of giving birth . . . a provision guaranteed to make employers reluctant to take on women. [My emphasis.]

Later on, the Employment Protection Act is denounced for making dismissal and redundancy more difficult and deterring employers from taking on labour which they cannot easily shed, 'if solvency dictates'. Who are the masters now?

The issue of unemployment, then, is a crucial one for the new Thatcher-Joseph axis. Instead of demand-management and remedial policies, they want a direct strategy for reshaping the labour market. The best and clearest statement of the way they are thinking – certainly more kindly put than in the *Telegraph* – is provided by Samuel Brittan in his new *Second Thoughts on Full Employment Policy* (Centre for Policy Studies, £2.00). He doesn't deal with other factors specifically, but this is where Conservative policy on council housing comes in. Their fundamental objection to it (apart from the psephological one, and the fact that people living in council houses are famous for burning them down, peeing in them and making fortunes in the process) is that it inhibits the movement and mobility of labour. Thus the new fashion for the sale of council houses to sitting tenants, which is not at all an electoral loser in the Labour seats where the Tories have tried it, takes on a general importance. If a worker is secure in his job and safe in his house, then how is he to respond to the free play of market forces? The whole thing has plainly gone too far.

One final point on unemployment and the way in which it is calculated. There are, on the best estimate available, some 300,000 unemployed women who do not appear on the register. They are always the first to suffer in any fluctuation. About half are married, do not pay the full national insurance rate when in work, and thus don't qualify for benefit when they are on the cobbles. If Sir Keith's challenge to the data of the Department of Employment were consistent, he might point this out. But no (nor does anyone much in the Labour movement for that matter). Recently Sir Keith wrote in the *Observer* that the pursuit of equality would turn the country into 'a totalitarian slum'. It appears that equality is not yet a very serious problem in Britain. But there is already more of it than the Tories think we can stand.

Armed with their Republican ideas, the Tories are assembling a broad front of opposition to more or less everything that Labour has done since the war. It should be an interesting contest. Mrs Thatcher wants the party to be 'a choice not an echo'. It looks like a prescription for a reign of piety and iron.

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Anthony Howard

Political Parties and Public Funds

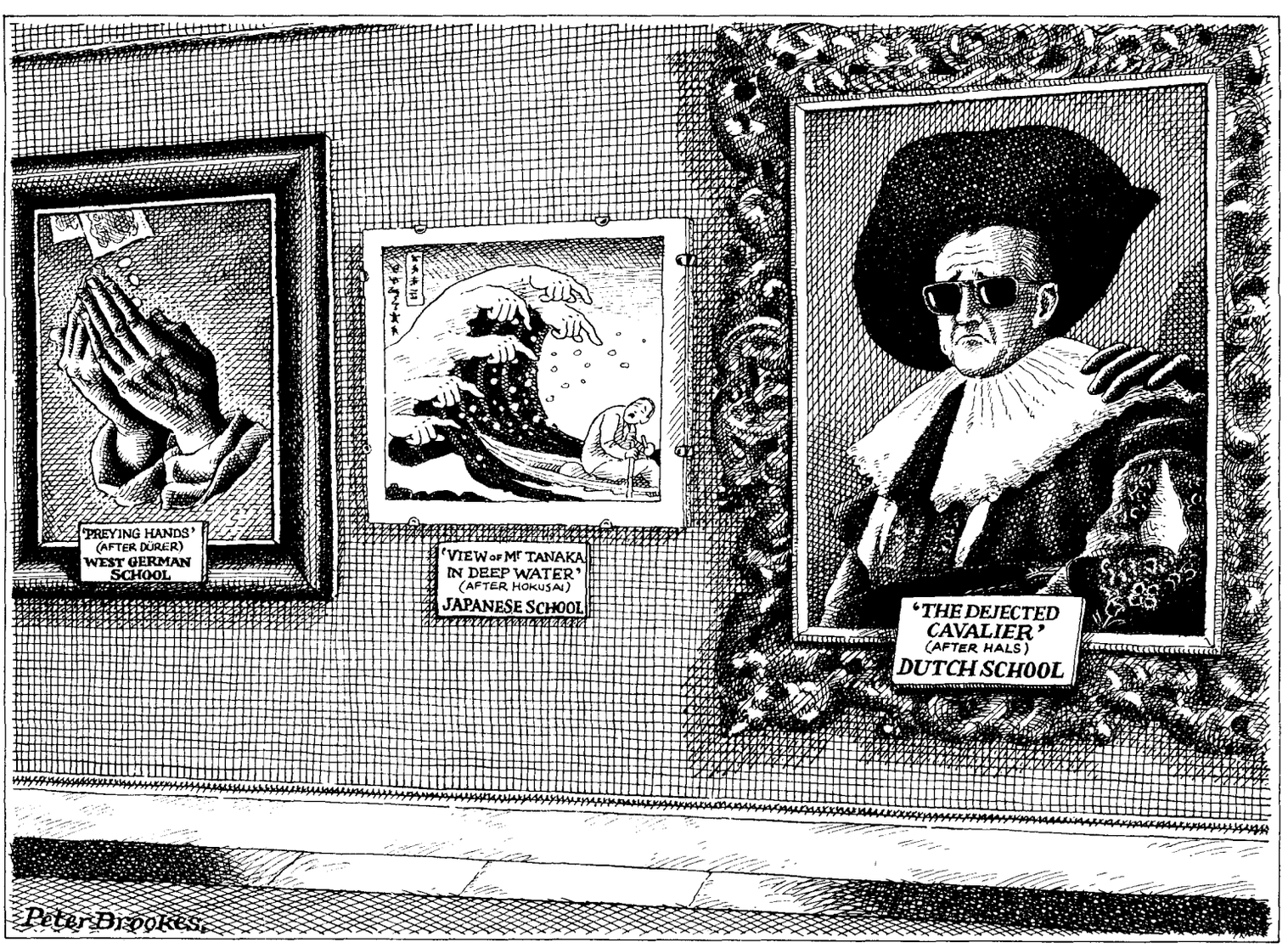
Sweden, where I happened to be last week, was not perhaps a bad place in which to read of and reflect upon the report of Lord Houghton's committee on state aid to political parties.* For, as the report itself makes clear, Sweden was one of the committee's show-case examples – a country where, to quote the committee's own words, 'the introduction of subsidies has produced few adverse side-effects . . . on the contrary it was clear that the money provided from state funds was regarded as the only "neutral" money received by the parties'. Let me say at once that I do not at all dispute the committee's reading of the mood among politicians of all parties in Sweden: with one accord they hastened to assure me that the decision to make taxpayers' money available as a form of supplementary benefit to those engaged in political activity was one of the wisest and most far-seeing their country had ever taken.

Indeed, it was only last Sunday night in Stockholm that I got myself, as usual, into trouble. I had dared to inquire whether it was really defensible that political parties should be allowed to drink freely at the public trough while other voluntary organisations (say, the churches, the Boy Scouts or the YMCA) had to depend on the much less certain flow of private financial support. 'But where', I was promptly asked, 'is your problem? Here in Sweden the state naturally supports all these things. Why, even those like me who are unbelievers cheerfully pay taxes to the church.'

The answer, though crushing to me at the time, is just as devastating to Lord Houghton and his seven colleagues who signed the committee's majority recommendations. The road down which they so insistently beckon us has, in fact, only one ultimate destination – the corporate state. The moment governments get into a position to control the purse-strings of their political opponents is also the moment at which dissent in any society makes an unconditional surrender to conformity. To say that is not to prejudge Sweden's important current election campaign, to which in any case I hope to return next week: it is merely to indicate the obvious – that a clash of ideology, a collision of ideals, a challenge to underlying assumptions has not been among its most striking characteristics.

And, or so I would argue, for a fairly obvious reason. The original state subsidy proposal made in the Swedish Riksdag in 1965 was that the various parties should collectively agree to the state supplying annual subventions to newspapers (which in Sweden tend to belong to the political parties). The Swedish Parliament, partly for self-interested reasons (the Liberal Party, though the smallest of the main parties in Parliament, has the greatest power in the press), blocked the proposal. But within a year or two the snare had been rather more carefully laid in the path of the prey. If Swedish MPs did not want to ladle out public money to the press, how about instead seeing to it that funds were channelled in the more pure-minded direction of political parties? Without a moment's hesitation Sweden's 350 MPs promptly reversed themselves and a year or two later, since a sense of shame can occasionally affect even the self-righteous, the general press subsidy went through, too.

*Financial Aid to Political Parties *HMSO* Cmnd 6601 £4.05


'PREYING HANDS' (AFTER DÜRER) WEST GERMAN SCHOOL
'VIEW OF MT TANAKA IN DEEP WATER' (AFTER HOKUSAI) JAPANESE SCHOOL
'THE DEJECTED CAVALIER' (AFTER HALS) DUTCH SCHOOL
Peter Brookes

'The Lockheed Bequest' – a Rogues' Gallery

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One other milestone deserves perhaps to be observed along the same compromising road. Just before the 1973 election, in which the Swedish Social Democrats and the Communists got exactly the same number of seats as the three Opposition, bourgeois, parties, a constitutional amendment was conveniently passed relieving cabinet ministers of any obligation to trudge through the lobbies of Parliament. Each individual member of the cabinet would, it was agreed, in future be entitled to an 'alternate' (or substitute) whose job it would be to attend and vote on his/her behalf in order to free the cabinet minister from any distraction from the responsibility of governing the realm. And so – without a murmur or protest from the Opposition – has the Swedish state in fact been administered these past three years.

I do not suggest for one moment that any socialist or even democrat in Britain would wish to follow the Swedish 'model' down to that sort of logical conclusion. But the trouble with the kind of 'administrative' (but, in reality, basic *constitutional*) changes suggested by Lord Houghton and his colleagues is that they soon acquire a momentum of their own. Indeed, we have already seen the process start. Far and away the most beguiling point made by Lord Houghton and his colleagues lies in their reminder that they are not, in fact, suggesting anything revolutionary. Has not Parliament already made arrangements for over £200,000 to be paid each year to those Opposition parties fortunate enough to enjoy representation in the House of Commons? What justification is there for allowing public money to be slipped to the parliamentary whips' offices and at the same time refusing it to those trying to break into the parliamentary ring?

The answer, of course, is that there is, and can be, none. But just because a bad principle has gained a foothold in Parliament is hardly a sufficient reason for immediately allowing it to expand into a stranglehold on our whole political system. Fortunately, the dangers of permitting that to happen have already been spelt out by Mr Ian Aitken and his three colleagues who signed the committee's minority report.

Theirs is a powerful and persuasive protest – and if I had to fault their argument at all it would only be for the emphasis that they choose to give to the present economic climate scarcely providing an ideal background for a disbursement of public money even to so privileged a group as politicians. It is certainly a valid point but it is also perhaps a dangerous one. For unless I mistake the enthusiasm of the rest of the committee they would willingly settle for an acceptance in principle *(à la* Boyle on ministers' and MPs' salaries) with only the vesting date to be decided later.

Significantly enough, the most determined members of the majority are said to have been the committee's two professional politicians – Lord Houghton (a former chairman of the PLP) and Mr Reg Underhill (the Labour Party's present National Agent). That, in itself, perhaps tells its own tale, though a further indication of the politicians' trade union in action came with the odd way in which the Houghton committee chose to handle the presentation of its recommendations. The report was published last Thursday and thus *Tribune*, *New Society*, the *Spectator* and the NS were all unable to make any comment upon it in the week in which it appeared. But one weekly paper, with an almost identical press time, was able not only to cover the report as its main story of the week but also to comment upon it (favourably) editorially. That paper, which will hardly come as a surprise to those who understand the ways of democratic centralism, was *Labour Weekly*, the Transport House version of *Pravda*.

Possibly there is a parable there of the kind of behaviour we can expect if the Houghton committee's recommendations eventually do gain parliamentary acceptance. There is nothing like the guarantee of public money – or even the sniff of it – for encouraging political apparatchiks and party bureaucrats to behave arrogantly. The sums that the Houghton committee suggests – £2.3m. for a population of 56 million, compared with the £15m. already being spent in Sweden for a population of 8 million – may seem too fragile a basis on which to rest so melodramatic a thesis. But in these matters it is always the initial commitment in principle that counts. To do *Labour Weekly* justice, one other paper last weekend recognised that. The general run of press comment on the report may have been ribald and scornful but last Saturday's *Economist* could hardly have been more enthusiastic in endorsing the Houghton committee's proposals. Politics, we all know, makes strange bedfellows: but when the TGWU can lie down with the CBI and the *Economist* can cheerfully climb into bed with *Labour Weekly*, the threat of the conformist corporate state is perhaps nearer than most of us would like to think.

David Leitch

Miracle Man in the Matignon

Keynes or Cripps? Both these mighty names from the economists' pantheon have been cited incessantly in Paris this week apropos Raymond Barre, France's newest prime minister. The historical comparisons implied do not go very deep but, in simple terms, they have the merit of defining French hopes – and fears – about what the new incumbent at the Hôtel Matignon will mean to them personally.

The optimists, who are pretty thin on the ground, follow President Giscard's lead in describing Monsieur Barre as 'the best economist in France' (or sometimes in Europe) and then going on to talk about Keynes. By this they do not intend so much to indicate a similarity in economic orthodoxy as a dream of financial super-wizardry. After all, Barre's text-books have long been required reading for students. So much so that one or two of them have come forward to point out that his major manual of political economy, in two fat volumes running to 1,614 pages, refers to the problems of unemployment on only three occasions.

But, if you favour the Keynes comparison, such details are irrelevant. The dream is too expansive for that. It sees France in terms of King's College, Cambridge in the early 1930s, a temporarily impoverished institution which only needs a genius to come along and discover somewhere a big roulette game played without a zero for it to enter into its true inheritance, and become as rich as Croesus.

The second, Crippsian, school of commentators adopts a more masochistic position, which involves, incidentally, all kinds of complimentary references to our domestic battle against inflation and the part the unions have played in it. They are saying, in brief, that the new Prime Minister, who will also carry the Finance Minister's portfolio, is precisely the right man to persuade the nation that unless they tighten their belts several notches in the weeks to come then by Christmas they run the risk of losing their pants. The 'Barre plan', to be announced in the next fortnight, promises a level of austerity which has no French precedent in the life of the Fifth Republic.

As the new Prime Minister remarked on the eve of his first meetings with union leaders: 'The economic path France is now following leads ineluctably to an impasse at the bottom of which there is the certitude of a catastrophe.' Thus, we see, he is no mean man with a metaphor, quite apart from his gifts when it comes to slide-rules. The unions will reply that when it comes to tightening belts there is a matter of one million unemployed to consider, as well as questions like devising a system which ensures that those citizens earning more than £2,000 *a month* will actually pay some taxes at least.

Quite apart from what M. Barre plans in the austerity line in September, the appalled reaction to the emergency taxes already announced because of the drought give some indication of the battles to come.

Yet there is something in the Keynesian 'financial wizard' image which President Giscard, the new Prime Minister's friends and a handful of recidivist optimists have been trying so hard to propagate. The announcement of Jacques Chirac's resignation, and the choice of successor, immediately eased the apparently inexorable run on the franc which obliged Giscard to truncate his summer vacation in Africa. It may not have been very logical, but it happened and so in one sense the new occupant of the Matignon is off to a better start than he might have feared. Despite any gifts magical or otherwise, he may possess, it is a fact that his last month as Minister for External Trade (July) marked a record deficit of £186m. in France's trade balance

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The rise in the franc indicates that the people who settle these matters in no way blame M. Barre for the slide. He has that going for him, if not much else.

And it is hard, in the end, to believe that the new Prime Minister is the key to France's problems. For the time being all eyes are on him, and it is already clear that, unlike his predecessor, he is able to call on a fund of goodwill. The emphasis on Anglo-Saxon comparisons somewhat obscures his profound Frenchness. He is the kind of man the French can sympathise with because there are so many ordinary blokes around who resemble him. Even his profile is a kind of archetype, a physiognomy that is produced by a lifetime of *escargots* and good Bordeaux, a concave silhouette in the form of a gentle 's' from double-chin to incipient *embonpoint* which inspires confidence and affection.

Although M. Barre is, as I say, temporarily in the forefront, what really emerges from the hectic events of the government change is that President Giscard, so eloquent in 1967 about General de Gaulle's penchant for the exercise of solitary power, is now himself following the same imperial path. Jacques Chirac may not have been conspicuous for his human generosity but he was loyal – until last week anyway.

Then it was surprising to hear the bitterness of his feelings, delicately conveyed by those former 'collaborators', themselves now mostly out of a job, when it came to his relationship with the increasingly isolated President. 'At least with De Gaulle you could discuss things', he was widely quoted as saying. 'You don't talk or discuss with Giscard – you report.' And there emerged for the first time all kinds of detail to do with the President's secrecy, and what again Chirac called 'his imperial style, as if he is haunted by De Gaulle and Louis XV'.

Both France's nuclear policy and her relations with the West Germans were being cited as areas where Giscard disclosed almost nothing to his Prime Minister. And parallel with this increasing tendency to retain certain 'presidential domains', for himself alone, another characteristically Gaullian approach to the presidency, the former Chirac men have been falling over themselves to describe Giscard's obsession with etiquette, his coldness, the pretensions of a man obsessed with the reactions of such crowds as he meets nowadays, and public reaction to his television appearances.

It is ironic in the circumstances that perhaps the most crucial disagreement between Giscard and his ex-Prime Minister was to do with bringing forward the date of parliamentary elections to next October. Chirac thought that, were the elections to be held then, they could be won, *on condition* that Giscard announced between the two rounds that if the socialists won a majority then he would himself resign. It seems to be the use of that fateful word which convinced Giscard that he and Chirac had come to the parting of the ways. A stage has now been reached where the President regards its use as tantamount to an insult to the head of state. Keynes or Cripps, in the weeks to come the sympathetic M. Barre is destined to be only a subsidiary figure on the French stage.

Paris

Roger Murray

Whose Freedom in Namibia?

While the continuing township riots in South Africa and the escalating guerrilla insurgency against the Smith regime in Rhodesia have been making the world's headlines, events in the huge, mineral-rich territory of Namibia have been moving towards a climax. After 57 years of direct colonial rule, Pretoria has officially declared its willingness to accept the independence of Namibia under a scheme which provides for the establishment of a 'multiracial' provisional government and independence by 31 December 1978. But the decision, while welcomed by Namibia's 99,000-strong white community, has caused little euphoria among Namibia's African population of 850,000 and has been rejected outright by the South West African People's Organisation (Swapo), recognised as the only authentic representative of the people of Namibia by both the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity. In Lusaka, Swapo's president, Sam Nujoma, has declared his organisation's intention of intensifying the political and military struggle against any 'puppet regime' established by South Africa, while Sean MacBride, the United Nations Commissioner for Namibia appointed by the General Assembly two years ago, has characterised the move as an attempt to set up a 'quisling' government.

These hostile reactions to a move that several years ago might have been credited as a bold initiative by Pretoria are based on nationalist suspicions that it really represents an attempt to side-step the growing international pressure on South Africa for a total withdrawal of its colonial administration and military forces of occupation from Namibia, and doubts about the degree of political and economic independence that Pretoria is prepared to concede to a Namibian provisional government that does not include Swapo – the key member of the Namibian National Convention, an umbrella grouping of black political organisations formed in February 1975 on a cross-ethnic and national basis to oppose South Africa's plans for the territory.

That Pretoria is now prepared to take the risk of accepting Namibia's independence at all is due in large part to its relative success in persuading a number of traditional tribal leaders from the 11 'ethnic groups' into which Namibia's African population is divided, under South Africa's system of racial classification, to participate in discussions on the territory's constitutional future in Windhoek. Since September 1975, following a much-vaunted 'historic initiative' by the territory's National Party leadership (after, of course, prior ratification by Mr Vorster), 157 African, Coloured and white delegates have been meeting intermittently in the Turnhalle, a former gymnasium used by the old German colonial regime, in an attempt to decide the territory's political future.

Although at the outset Mr Vorster, and his chief representative in Namibia, Mr Jannie de Wet, the 'Commissioner-General for the Indigenous Peoples', declared that 'all options' were open to the delegates, including that of a unitary state, the proceedings have been marked by repeated attempts to foist the South African Bantustan policy, separate 'homelands' for each ethnic group, on to the delegates. This has been facilitated by the presence in the African delegation of the conservative tribal leaders from Ovamboland, Kavangoland and East Caprivi, comprising the northern third of the country, with over half of the total African population, which have been declared 'self-governing homelands' by the Pretoria parliament, with limited powers over internal matters. These chiefs rely on the presence of South African police and troops to maintain an increasingly harsh and repressive rule over their people, and they regard Swapo's national appeal as a direct threat to their own traditionalist rule.

The chiefs' political influence has been to some extent balanced by tribal delegations from the south, including the Hereros, Damaras, Namas and other smaller groups, who have made common cause with Dirk Mudge, the *verligte* (moderate) deputy leader of the National Party in Namibia, in attempting to work out a constitutional structure that would both provide for a national government in compliance with the UN and Swapo demands, while not alienating the white community or seriously challenging the economic status quo. Mudge has been supported by Namibia's 30,000-strong German community, who dominate the farming industry and retail trade in Namibia's remarkably Germanic-looking towns, and who have become increasingly critical of South Africa's failure to clarify its intentions and the political monopoly exercised

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by the National Party, which supplied the three white delegates to the talks and controls the 18-member South West African Legislative Assembly.

The most concrete proposals, involving the establishment of a bi-cameral legislature elected on an equal basis from a 'northern' and a 'southern' constituency, and with guarantees for minorities, have been those proposed by Chief Clemens Kapuuo of the Hereros, the only tribal leader with some claim to national support.

The strictly limited independence that Pretoria is prepared to grant Namibia was emphasised at the annual congress of the National Party which has just been held in Windhoek. The congress issued a statement endorsing the establishment of a multi-racial interim government to negotiate the territory's independence from South Africa, and Defence Minister M. C. Botha even hinted that Pretoria would be willing to withdraw its military forces if the inhabitants wished it. But he stated that they were not there to 'dominate' the Namibian people, a theme taken up by Dirk Mudge, who is likely to become the prime minister of any interim government. He said in an interview that Pretoria envisaged a 'defence agreement' with Namibia after it became independent and that the Turnhalle delegates were agreed that troops should remain at least during the transitional period, and for so long as guerrilla incursions from Angola by Swapo continued. The UN and Swapo have all along insisted that South Africa's forces must be withdrawn from Namibia before there can be any agreement on the territory's independence.

One important factor that has played a part in forcing South Africa to make a show of observing the UN stipulations has been the abundant signs of a loss of confidence among the local business community and Western mining corporations with important investments in the territory's mineral wealth. Officials have repeatedly warned against 'pessimism', and in July a representative of the white mineworkers' union made a public appeal to whites not to leave the territory, following an estimated loss of 20 per cent of the white labour force at the US-owned Tsumeb Corporation, Namibia's foremost base metal producer, which is located in the north-east, and uncomfortably close to the area of guerrilla insurgency.

Namibia's mineral wealth, the country's principal economic asset, is controlled by overseas and South African-based mining corporations. As well as gem diamonds and uranium, there are substantial deposits of copper, lead, tin and zinc, and a variety of semi-precious stones. There are now up to 150 prospecting operations going on. In addition Namibia has an extensive offshore fishing industry, larger than that of South Africa itself, based in Walvis Bay, and a lucrative ranching industry based on the processing and export of karakul sheep skins and cattle meat. Until now the only African share in the vast profits created by these industries has come through the meagre earnings of the black labour force, most of them migrants from northern Namibia. The reversal of the trend towards financial control of Namibia's economic resources by South Africa would involve the establishment of an effective central government, in a position to negotiate on an equal basis with Pretoria and foreign mining interests. It is for this reason above all that Pretoria fears Swapo.

Bel Mooney

The Trico Women's Strike

At 6 a.m. on Tuesday the windscreens passing the picket outside the gates of Trico-Folberth Ltd were sliced by wipers. It was raining; yet a handful of women had sat up all night – *and* all through Bank Holiday Monday when the other factories around the Great West Road lay silent. Without windscreen wipers, car production in Britain could cease. The permanent picket is outside one of the world's largest manufacturers of wipers: the American-owned factory where the longest and most important strike for equal pay in Britain is now in its 15th week.

The work on Trico's Brentford production line is monotonous, the conditions poor. The women who assemble wiper blades and motors, for £46.50 a week, say the pace is hard. Trico (which operates also in Brazil, Argentina and South Africa) has a reputation as a bad employer; when it opened a new factory in Northampton even the Engineering Employers' Federation had to step in to ensure it paid the minimum wage. Last September, at Brentford, Trico stopped the night shift, offering male workers redundancy or the day shift. Five chose the day shift but were still paid £52.50 – £6 more than women working on the same line at the same job.

At once equal pay was an issue. But Trico, seizing upon the woolly phrasing of the Equal Pay Act, claimed that the differential was justified as there was a 'material difference' in the men's situation. The men, apparently, were more 'flexible' – until the AUEW reminded Trico of a local agreement which stated that women too could move to other parts of the line. Trico also said that the unequal pay was temporary, promising in effect that there would soon be a 'levelling down' to the women's lower rate, rather than a 'levelling up' to the men's.

In May, after negotiation failed, the women decided to strike. Some 300 women and 150 men came out, supported officially by the AUEW. The company's attempts to keep the factory in production have caused various incidents, the most serious at the end of July. Three 'cowboy' lorries, carrying materials and escorted by five busloads of police, tried to cross the picket line. When the strikers went to approach the drivers there were scuffles and arrests, the main effect of which was to harden the women's resolve: 'I don't know much about the law, but it's obvious that it's not for the likes of us.' On strike pay of £10 a week they renewed their determination to stay out.

When this strike by 'just a few women' failed to flag, Trico went to the Industrial Tribunal. The strikers' committee, observing that successive tribunals have interpreted the Equal Pay Act in favour of employers, ignored the proceedings – and last week the tribunal judged as they expected.

Five days ago the women received two letters, the first politely on company paper, the second baldly anonymous. Both advised the strikers 'in their own interests' to cross the picket lines – where they would be given full police protection – and so 'bring about a situation where lay-offs and redundancy are no longer inevitable'. Threatening letters can intimidate. But on Tuesday, at a lunch-time mass meeting, about 300 strikers packed a tiny church hall to vote unanimously to stay out. 'We are not just fighting for our own case,' said a shop steward, 'we're fighting for the principle of equal pay. A victory for us will be a victory for all women – so we *have* to win.'

The strike has revealed the frailty of a vague Act, which, in permitting tribunals to interpret the letter rather than the spirit of the law, has too often seemed to serve the status quo. Certainly employers have been quick to seek out loopholes; in the first six months of its operation tribunals have found against workers in 70 per cent of the cases brought before them. At Trico, when the tribunal judged that the men were a 'special case', after the first-ever application by an *employer*, the women knew that the Act was not for them. Many trade unionists now fear that employers will try to pre-empt industrial action by provoking a tribunal hearing at an early stage in negotiations, confident that it will find in their favour – recognising moreover that such a decision gives a quasi-legal backing to their case, and makes industrial action seem the more unreasonable.

In staying out, despite the tribunal, the women at Trico have proved their confidence and strength. More than that, they have found that efficiency and determination can win the support of male trade unionists, some of whom, though, still say 'They can afford to strike because they've got husbands', which is frequently untrue, and hardly relevant to the justice of a claim. At Tuesday's meeting two shop stewards from Ford promised to black all Trico products and their substitutes. That night the Greater London Association of Trades Councils met, for the first time in its history to support a particular strike – arranging picket duty, blacking and money-raising for the essential strike fund. On Monday a delegation of strikers will lobby the TUC. Contrary to Trico's expectations, the strike by women with no previous union experience will continue.

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Paul Johnson

Towards the Parasite State

Exactly 200 years ago, Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations*, celebrated the liberation of the working man. Since the earliest times, he had rarely been fully free in an economic sense. He had been classified and bound, not by his ability and his willingness to work, but by his status. In the declining Roman empire, he had been herded into state-defined corporations, which compelled him to exercise a certain trade, and no other, during his lifetime; and later, the idea of the corporation was extended, to cover his children and grandchildren, so that status and trade became not merely compulsory, but hereditary. It was on this basis that the serfdom and rigid categories of the feudal society evolved; and when, after centuries, the feudal ties were loosened, they were replaced by the guild system, which again rigidly defined and controlled occupational status, prevented freedom of movement, especially upward progression, and was backed up by government legislation – known in England as the Laws of Settlement – whose object was to petrify the existing mould of society.

In his own lifetime, Smith saw the system finally break down, the guilds crumble, the Laws of Settlement repealed or ignored. He rejoiced at these events. He saw mankind, for the first time in history, move from a society dominated by status to one based on contract, a freely-signed document by which one man pledged to work for another: a pledge revocable under law. This, to Smith, was real freedom; true justice. Above all, the change benefited most of the lowliest elements in society, those who had hitherto been the invariable victims of all political and social systems. To Smith, the right of a man to work where, when and how he wanted was the most important of all freedoms – far more vital to his well-being than a mere parliamentary vote. He wrote: 'The property which every man has in his own labour, as it is the original foundation of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable . . . to hinder [a poor man] from employing his strength and dexterity in what manner he thinks proper without injury to his neighbour is a plain violation of this most sacred property.'

Now, 200 years later, the burgeoning freedom which Adam Smith recognised and applauded is in imminent danger of extinction. The freedom of labour contracts is being removed by law, the worker is again judged not by his power and abilities but by his status – as a trade union member – and the jaws of the corporate state once more close around us.

In Britain today, a man can no longer freely sell his labour, since the union stands between him and his potential employer. An employer cannot make a contract either, since the union tells him which categories of men are employable, and which are not – the union often, indeed, acting as a compulsory labour exchange. And what are these categories of the non-employable? Those who do not belong to a union, or *the* union, or who belong to the wrong union. The most important fact in an economic sense about a worker in Britain today is not his skill or his training or his character but his union membership – in short, his status.

The terms of classification, of course, have changed. Men are no longer divided into peasants, bourgeois, gentry, but into members of the NUM, the TGWU, the AUEW, and so on. Since unions, like the old classes, are increasingly difficult to get into, or out of, union membership stamps a man for life – like a penal brand on his forehead – inhibiting his movements, or his wish to change his trade, or his will to remain an individual instead of a unit in an anonymous mass. A union card already confers a greater degree of real political power than a parliamentary vote. Increasingly, it is the title deed to full citizenship, more important than a birth certificate or a passport – an identity card, in fact, the only document which proves a man exists and has rights. Michael Foot and his gruesome trade union cronies have made it plain that a man without a union card will soon be a second-class citizen, a kind of non-person, a concept very familiar to the citizen-slaves of the Soviet Union.

The compulsory enforcement of the closed shop by parliamentary statute is the greatest disaster which has befallen liberty in my lifetime, a defeat for freedom comparable to those the Stuart kings attempted to inflict – and failed. What is more, there was a time, not so long ago, when even the most enthusiastic supporters of trade unionism would have recognised it as such. George Howell, a union witness to the first Royal Commission on Trades Unions, wrote in 1878: 'The common sense of the majority of unionists will soon consign a policy of this kind [closed shop] to the limbo of the past, as it has done in the case of opposition to machinery and many other matters . . . the practice cannot be defended on either social or political grounds.' Until recently, virtually all exponents of trade union theory and practice deplored the concept. Dr N. Barous (*British Trades Unions*, Gollancz 1947) called it 'a child of the most violent period of industrial conflict'. He thought it self-evident that 'in a democratic state, where the freedom of the individual and his association are protected by law, where the use of brute force in industrial conflicts is a punishable offence, and where a highly developed practice of conciliation and arbitration exists, there is not much need, and little justification, for the unions employing a closed-shop policy'. V. L. Allen (*Power in the Trade Unions*, Longmans 1954) argued that a union 'can regulate but it must not coerce, and if it is unable to retain its members by inducements, by satisfying their wants, then it is not entitled to have members'.

Moreover, until recently, even militant trade unionists felt ashamed of the term 'closed shop', and sought to disguise it by euphemisms – 'all-ticket job', 'all-union house', '100-per-cent trade unionism'. The most thorough investigator of the closed shop in Britain, W. E. J. McCarthy, noted: 'In the writer's experience [trade union leaders] invariably use the phrase [closed shop] to describe *any* situation where union membership is a condition of employment so long as they are talking among themselves, or in front of an observer they have more or less accepted.' Officially, though, it was TUC policy to use the term '100-per-cent shop', which, the General Council noted in 1946, did not 'imply a claim on the part of any particular union to exclusive rights of organisation where *bona fide* unions are concerned'. Indeed, in the same vear, the TUC, in its annual report, stated flatly: 'The "Closed Shop", in the sense of an establishment in which only members of a particular union can be employed, to the exclusion of members of other unions, is alien to British trade union practice and theory.'

How times change! Now that the unions have Michael Foot on their side, now that they command a servile parliamentary majority to pass statutes at their orders, there is no longer any attempt to disguise the closed shop behind euphemisms. On the contrary, it is enforced openly, ruthlessly and with complete disregard to the injustice it inflicts on individuals. No one glories more in sheer brute power than a trade union bureaucrat who has got the opposition on the run. The number of victims who have lost their livelihood grows daily. There is, for instance, Mrs Iris Batchelor, who lost her job as a checkout operator because she refused to join USDAW – despite the fact that union membership was not stipulated in her contract. The management, under pressure from the union, simply changed her contract and she was sacked. No redress, of course. And, as it happens, her husband had just been made redundant. A fat lot the union cares about that! Or there is George Lilley, aged 61, sacked by British Rail after 24 years' service, who refused to attend the inquisitorial court at Peterborough to 'state his reasons' for not joining the 'stipulated union'. British Rail said he had 'frustrated his contract' – and promptly replaced him by two men.

Britain, it should be noted, is the only country in the EEC where legislation is in force which specifically enables the closed shop to be introduced. Implicitly, or explicitly, the closed shop is illegal in France, West Germany, Italy, Ireland, Denmark and Belgium. Indeed, it is very likely illegal

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under the European Rights Convention, of which Britain is a signatory, and which upholds the right to 'freedom of thought, conscience and religion'. Some of the victims are to appeal to the Strasbourg Court under this convention. They are getting no support, needless to say, from that 'progressive' pressure group laughably calling itself the National Council for Civil Liberties. Asked why the NCCL were not taking up the cause of the closed-shop victims, Howard Levenson, legal officer to the NCCL, replied, in a choice example of Stalinist prose: 'So far as the sphere of employment is concerned, we take the view that most of the civil liberties that the citizen enjoys at work derive from the opportunity to combine and to negotiate collectively, and we resist limitations on this opportunity to redress the balance of power between employer and employed.' Get it? Whatever the unions do is right so far as the NCCL is concerned.

That the closed shop is a threat to civil liberties is self-evident. But it is perhaps a greater threat than most people yet realise. Once the closed shop is legal, as it now is, the principle is capable of almost indefinite extension. Thus one 'closed' plant, firm or corporation can enforce a closed shop on another – even if all its employees are against it. This is already happening. In June, for instance, Chrysler, a union-dominated firm just saved from bankruptcy by the British taxpayer, decided to entertain tenders submitted for contract only from firms with a 100-per-cent closed shop. Chrysler contract specifications read: 'The contractor should note that all labour which he intends to utilise on this project must be a current member of the appropriate trade union as applicable to his trade.'

Laughing at the Law

Indeed, once a closed shop is established, and enforceable at law, there is literally no limit to the power of the trade union bureaucrats. They are not only above the law; they can openly laugh at it. At Vauxhall motors, Luton, Stephen Rosengrove had caught more than 100 pilferers in six years, saving the firm £100,000. Leaders of the three biggest Vauxhall unions, the TGWU, the Engineers, and the Electricians, formed up and forced the management to shift Rosengrove from gate-duty to a harmless test-track four miles away. As an official of the Joint Union Works Committee said: 'This man has been a problem for a long time.' Of course he had: he had caught, red-handed, union members 'in good standing' stealing property! Certainly ordinary people who see militants break the law, or who are themselves the victims of their increasingly violent activities, are most reluctant to apply for legal redress: they know they are unlikely to get it – and there may be unpleasant consequences too. Thus the union bureaucracy tightens its grip.

Originally, of course, the wholly exceptional, indeed unique, legal privileges granted to unions – privileges which go against the spirit of English jurisprudence and the common law – were justified by the fact that workpeople were weak in the face of capital, and that ordinary union members were the victims of poverty, hardship and discrimination. Who would maintain such a fantasy now? The union bureaucracies who enjoy these privileges, like all other bureaucracies, operate not so much in the interests of their members, as in their own interests, which may be quite different. And the union structures themselves pay only lip-service to democracy: they are created and reinforced to further the objectives of the militant minority.

Rule-Book Jungle

Anyone who takes the trouble to examine union rule-books will find a bewildering jungle of ancient shibboleths and anomalous practices. Seven of the 20 biggest unions now have their elections supervised by the Electoral Reform Society. But the rules thus supervised may, or may not, have anything to do with democracy as ordinary people understand it. One of the principles of democracy, for instance, is periodic election. But Jack Jones, general secretary of the TGWU, got the job for life when he was elected, by individual ballot at branch or place of work. Out of 1,418,140 members, only 529,546, or 37 per cent, voted; of these, Jones got 334,125 votes. So Jones secured a lifetime job, with the votes of less than a quarter of his members. David Basnett, elected general secretary of the GMWU, also has the job for life. But in his union the 'block' branch ballot system applies: that is, whoever gets the majority of votes of those who bother to attend the branch meeting, is automatically assumed to have the votes of all that branch's members. Officially, then, nearly 90 per cent of the branches voted; in fact the number of individuals who actually did vote was probably less than 10 per cent.

You may well say: some democracy. As it happens, there have been improvements recently, thanks to postal balloting. When Hugh Scanlon, who has strutted importantly about the national stage for some years, was elected the president of the Engineers in 1968, only 11 per cent of members voted. Introduction of postal balloting raised the total to 38 per cent. Bob Wright, candidate of the 'Broad Left' (i.e., left-wing Labour plus Communists), regarded as Hugh Scanlon's 'natural' successor, has accordingly been defeated in three successive postal ballots. The inescapable inference is that if a postal ballot had been used in 1968, Scanlon would not have been elected, and none of us would ever have heard of him.

The ways in which 'democracy' is supposed to operate among this privileged section of society are almost infinite. In NALGO, for instance, the general secretary is appointed by the 70-strong national executive, itself elected annually; once in, however, he is mighty difficult to shift.

In ASTMS, national executive members are elected by a show of hands – always a bad principle – though branches have the option of organising a secret or postal ballot. These executive members are elected every two years; but the general secretary, Clive Jenkins, no less, got his job for life: he may be in it for another 20 years! The Building Workers have no option but to vote by show of hands, and not even at their place of work but at the branch; no wonder participation is very low – not much democracy there. And where participation is tiny, as in UCATT and USDAW, once a group of men get their hands on the machines, they are almost impossible to shift. Such strangleholds have little to do with politics.

Trade unionism, indeed, is not basically about political principles and humanitarian ideals. It is about jobs, money and power. The top trade union bureaucrats, irrespective of their political views, are the new elite, a privileged aristocracy enjoying perks and immunities virtually unknown in Britain since the 18th century. They are what Disraeli termed, in *Sybil*, a 'Venetian oligarchy', like the old Whig grandees, raised above the common herd and enjoying full access to all the sweets and savouries of a juicy and inequitable political system. They toil not, neither do they spin. Some, an increasing number, have never done manual work of any kind; they have been happily fulfilled bureaucrats all their adult lives. The rest have long since forgotten what the shop-floor is like. Much of their time is spent travelling abroad, at 'international conferences'. And abroad, these days, British embassies are expected to jump to attention when the general secretaries heave in sight, howling for free meals, accommodation and the usual flunkeyism. They demand that big lunch and dinner parties be given for them to meet their 'opposite numbers' – who are, as it happens, increasingly highly educated and intelligent men (and women), who find the average British trade union general secretary an object of ribald amusement.

Overmanning Problem

Few of these privileged bureaucrats make any secret, at least in practice, of their determination to use their growing power to the full. Occasionally they mouth platitudes about the need for national effort – the phrase 'the Dunkirk spirit' is always on the lips of Brother Jones – but in reality they are irrevocably wedded to restrictive practices of every kind. What is holding back investment in Britain, what is principally responsible for the low standards of living of the British working class, and what is now causing high unemployment – which seems almost certain to become again a permanent feature of our economic life – is the insistence, by the union bureaucrats over a period of a quarter of a century, on overmanning. In 1966, the *Sunday Times* published (6 November) a study by William A. Allen, 'A Question of Manpower', which showed that British manufacturing industries are overmanned, on average, by a factor of two, and that the humane redeployment of labour could double Britain's GNP over 10 years. No union leader has ever been able to produce a satisfactory answer to these and similar studies. There is no answer.

But the top trade union bureaucrats are not interested in such arguments, which they dismiss as 'biased'. They are interested in power. And they would rather have power in a bankrupt nation than impotence in a prosperous one. They have no feeling for Britain. To the trade union barons patriotism is an empty word, an expression coined by 'them' for 'class purposes'. The fall in the pound is caused by 'them'. In their hearts, they do not really believe that Britain is becoming poorer. That is just 'their' story. The truth, so they tell them-

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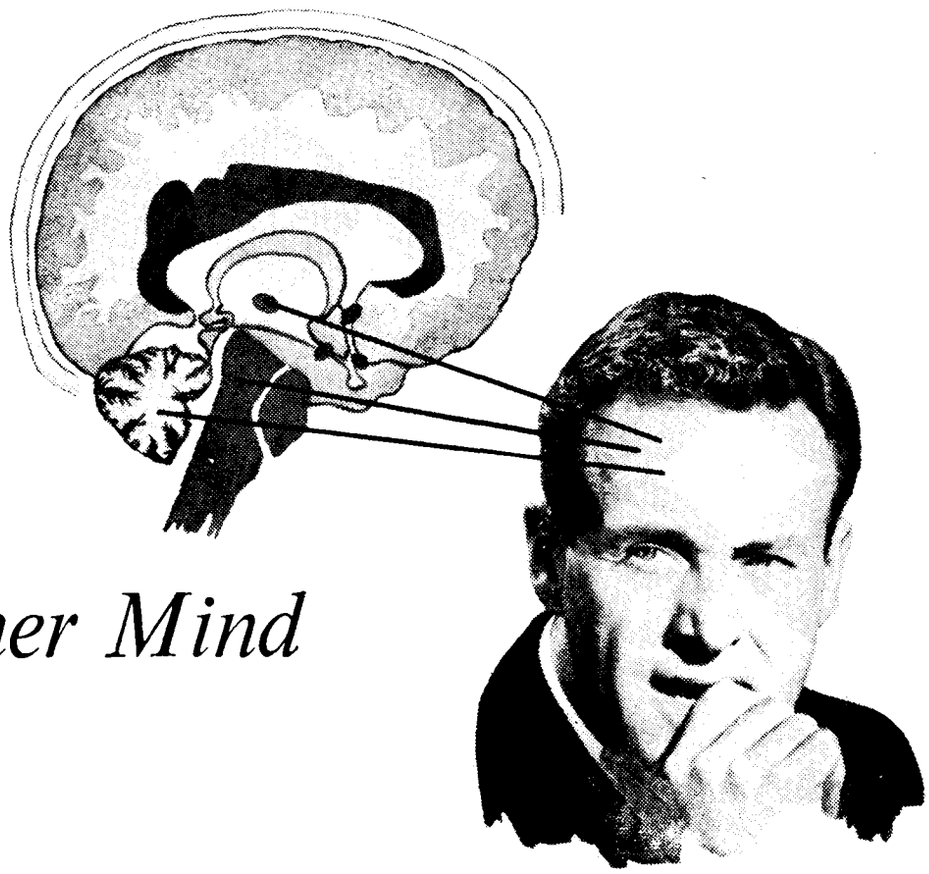
MEDITATION

The Psychic Bridge...



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selves, is that buried somewhere, perhaps under the Stock Exchange or the Bank of England, is an enormous deposit of money, filched from 'the workers' over the past 150 years, and just awaiting discovery and disinterment by sharp-eyed trade unionists. They simply cannot bring themselves to believe that the British capitalist cupboard is bare.

Indeed, the trade union bureaucrats have joined forces with their colleagues in the town halls and Whitehall to conduct a highly successful smash-and-grab raid on the public till. The biggest beneficiaries are in local government, where spending, in real terms, has risen 25 per cent since 1970. Does this mean more and better houses, schools, hospitals? Not a bit of it. It means bigger salaries, and more jobs, for the members of the public sector trade unions.

Bureaucrats' Power

The unions of bureaucrats are, furthermore, beginning to use their increased muscle power, based of course on their multiplying numbers, to force the Government to adopt policies which suit the interests of their members. A good example is the Inland Revenue Staff Federation, whose pressure this year persuaded the Chancellor to include in his Finance Bill provisions which give income-tax inspectors rights of entry and search already enjoyed by the Customs men who administer VAT. Here we see one way in which unions dictate policies which are erosions of ordinary freedom – for, to the average union bureaucrat, a knock on the door in the early hours is 'building socialism'. The man behind the clause which will allow 60,000 tax men to enter private homes is Cyril Plant, for the last 16 years general secretary of the IRSF, and this year's chairman of the TUC, no less. 'The Finance Bill will give our boys the chance to do something they have wanted for a long time,' he gloats. 'Why are people squealing when they have nothing to hide?'

Of course the idea that people might actually be devoted to individual freedom in the abstract is totally alien to the mind of the trade union bureaucrat. Plant says only six premises will be searched every year. But the Customs admit they have already been granted 352 search warrants since April 1973. Any magistrate can issue a warrant, though some warrants, under complicated regulations, can only be issued by permission of a General Commissioner of Inland Revenue. Does that make you feel safer? It ought to, according to Plant. 'They are responsible men,' he says, adding fatuously: 'They won't give the green light until they are sure there is no smoke without fire.' Then – a sinister point this: 'The PAYE worker has nothing to worry about.' The implication is that tax evasion is confined to the self-employed who, being the hardest-working group of people in the country, are the object of peculiar hatred among the union bureaucrats. But, as every household knows, the most widespread form of tax-evasion occurs among PAYE workers who do jobs in their spare time and insist on being paid in cash.

Clobbering the self-employed and what are anachronistically termed the 'middle classes' is, of course, a primary objective of TUC policy, and it has been carried out with ruthless thoroughness, especially since spring 1974. Professor Newbould, who runs the department of managerial economics at Bradford Management Centre, has calculated that in the decade 1965-75, while the Gross National Product rose by 26 per cent, only two tiny 'middle-class' categories registered gains in incomes (senior hospital administrators were up 1 per cent; senior managers in clearing banks and senior accountants were up 2 per cent). Incomes of the rest actually fell, from 11 per cent to 19 per cent, in the case of senior university staff.

But did the 'ordinary' workers do all that well? Comparatively, yes. But in absolute terms they did very badly, since the average gain for manual workers, 13 per cent, is only half the increase in the GNP. Where did the rest of the money go? Why, in 'building socialism' of course – that is, in the expense of maintaining bureaucracies.

Indeed, any idea that trade union policy materially assists the members it claims to serve, any idea that it helps anyone except the union bureaucrats, vanishes as soon as one begins to probe details of the unions' own finances. In a few years' time, as the closed shop completes its stranglehold on the nation, every British working man and woman will be forced to pay out to the union bureaucracies, just like income-tax. Where does this money go? That is not an easy question to answer. Mr Christopher Storey, who has investigated the returns made by eight major unions for 1974, filed at the Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations in Vincent Square, found that seven out of the eight spend much more on 'administrative expenses and other outgoings' than on unemployment pay or any other benefits to members. Jack Jones's union paid out £2.6m. in benefits to members, but it spent £8.6m. on 'administrative expenditures'. The GMWU spent only £900,000 on benefits, but a lordly £4.6m. on administration. NALGO seems to have spent £2m. on administration. The AUEW spent £4,396,692 on administration, which included £2,216,681 on staff remuneration, and (interesting, this) £148,339 on 'commission for collection of subscriptions'. In 1974, Jack Jones's union spent £381,660 on 'fares and motor expenses'. Clive Jenkins's lot spent £103,043 on travel. The GMWU paid out £158,691 on new motors, taking account of the value given for vehicles in part exchange.

Closed Shop Weapon

Whether or not such details are obtainable is entirely fortuitous. The form entitled Annual Return for a Trade Union (form AR21) which must be completed under Labour's Trade Union and Labour Relations Act, 1974, has a space for the salaries and wages component of 'administrative expenses', but for 1974 six out of the eight unions examined failed to give this information. Separate figures ought to be provided for the expenditures of head office, where the fat cats operate; but here the Certification Office has failed to get the unions to give details. Indeed, it does not have the statutory authority to enforce the provision of such information: in general, statutory requirements governing these returns are extremely lax – Michael Foot, or whoever was responsible, has done his work well.

But woe betide any humble trade unionist who questions the doings of the mighty above him! The union bureaucrats have ample power to deal with their recalcitrant subjects, including the right to expel. It is this which makes the closed shop such a terrifying weapon in their hands, because today expulsion means automatic loss of job too; indeed, if Michael Foot and his friends get their way, men and women thus expelled, and so unemployable, will also lose all entitlement to social security, and so will be driven to beg in the streets.

How easy is it for the bureaucrats to expel a member? The simple answer is: the easiest thing in the world. Most union rule books contain what Cyril Grunfeld (*Trade Unions and the Individual*, Fabian Society, 1957) calls 'rules which confer on the appropriate union body a general or blanket power of expulsion' – that is, for example, power to expel a member guilty of what one rule books calls 'conduct whether in connection with [the union], the trade, or otherwise, which is, in the opinion of the committee, directly or indirectly detrimental to the interests, welfare or reputation of the union'. This is the exact equivalent of the old Section Nine of Queen's Regulations, 'conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline', which allowed the army to 'get' a soldier otherwise guiltless of any specific charge.

The Expulsion Clause

What it means, in practice, is that the union bureaucrats can expel anyone they want. It is a perfect example of absolute power, such as that enjoyed by the Dominican Inquisition in 16th-century Spain. The research-worker F. P. Graham examined the rule books of 80 unions, representing 94 per cent of the TUC's general membership, and found that 66 books contained a clause of this type. (F.P. Graham: *A Legal Analysis of Trade Union Discipline in the United Kingdom*, DL Thesis, Oxford 1960.) In some rule books, quite deliberate attempts are made to avoid the necessity of spelling out the offence in even the most general terms. In the case of the NUJ rule-book, the key clause could be operated to impose a complete censorship of the press. How fiercely are these clauses actually enforced? Professor Dennis Lloyd, in *The Law Relating to Unincorporated Associations* (London 1938), argues that unions ought at least to observe the principles of natural justice, that is, to serve a notice setting out the charge, and making it specific, to hold a proper hearing and give the accused the chance to defend himself, and to confine the hearing to the charge specified; he also argues that decisions must be reached in good faith and without bias. But how can such rules of natural justice, in practice, be enforced, especially now loss of union membership deprives a man of his livelihood – something which was *ultra vires* even for the Court of Star Chamber in its heyday? In fact some rule-books specifically repudiate the rules of natural justice. In the case of one big union, the rule book allows the executive to refuse to give the victim any reasons for expelling him; and it does

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not provide either for a notice of the charges, or the right to a hearing.

Presiding over this ramshackle system of injustice are the top union bureaucrats. They may not cut much of a figure abroad, where Britain – largely thanks to their efforts – is now regarded as a joke country, but here they inspire fear or respect among high and low. They regularly collect 'the peerages that are their due'. They recall to me James I's words to Parliament: 'Kings are justly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner of resemblance of divine power on earth . . . they make and unmake their subjects, they have power of raising and casting down . . . judges over all their subjects and in all causes, and yet accountable to none but God only' – the Great General Secretary in the Sky. MPs are at their beck and call. Recently, in a peculiarly humiliating exercise, Labour MPs hoping for sponsorship by NUPE had to write a 1,000-word essay, set by NUPE's General-Secretary, Alan Fisher, disproving the view that trade unions have too much power. The object was to discover which MPs, out of 16 applicants, had the requisite 'political fitness'.

Of course, we must accustom ourselves to the spectacle of MPs, who are after all elected only by the people, grovelling before union bureaucrats. Union muscle-flexing has only just begun. We noted the peerages that are their due. Would that a peerage was all! In fact, the trade union bureaucrats are now demanding, and getting, more and more of the top jobs. Here the master spirit is Jack Jones – who else? A few weeks ago he told a rally of transport workers at Alexandra Palace: '[At British Leyland] we have evolved a system of joint union-management committees based on the shop-stewards . . . We hope that soon we will be able to cap this scheme with 50 per cent of the seats on the top board of British Leyland . . . This reform will be the most radical, the most far-reaching of any of the reforms of the present Government.' Of course, once he has secured 50 per cent of the top jobs at Leyland for union bureaucrats, Jones can move to his wider objective, which is to secure 50 per cent of board-room jobs-for-the-boys in all companies controlled by the National Enterprise Board, and eventually on all large companies throughout the private sector. These directors will, naturally, be selected from a list drawn up by the TUC barons. What a victory that will be for the brothers!

In the meantime, there are 3,000 professional trade union officials in Britain, and 500 national officers – all clamouring for government 'Quango' jobs. This is about the same number of political hangers-on who, in the good old 18th-century days of Whig corruption, could expect, or at any rate hope, to get sinecure offices. The union bureaucrats are, in fact, luckier than their Whig precursors, since the numbers of government jobs available to them is constantly increasing, as more and more boards and paid committees are set up, and the proportion of salaried jobs going to the union men is increasing too. Jack Jones, on behalf of his particular bureaucrats, has naturally carried off the lion's share – not always to the satisfaction of his fellow-bureaucrats in other unions. Recently, George Smith, a former TUC chairman, who comes from the construction workers, protested angrily in a letter to the UCATT-sponsored MPs, about Jones's success in bagging jobs for his boys. He cited in particular the case of Leslie Kemp, 56, national secretary of the TGWU construction group, who is due to retire *on grounds of ill-health*, but who has nevertheless been awarded 'Quango' jobs to the value of £10,000 a year. John Silkin, a member of the TGWU's parliamentary panel, recently appointed Kemp chairman of the Corby Development Council at £4,000 a year, and deputy chairman of Peterborough Development Council, at just under £2,000 a year; on top of this, he is to be chairman of the Construction Industry Training Board, an appointment in the gift of the Employment Minister, Albert Booth. Smith says in his letter: 'Ian Mikardo's statement at the last Labour Party conference about everybody being expected to fall down before the 1,800,000 votes of the TGWU is beginning to ring true.' He adds, savagely: 'Political nepotism does not make for good parliamentary democracy.'

Will anything come of this protest? I doubt it. Jack Jones is as powerful and as untouchable as the Duke of Newcastle in the mid-18th century. His view is that the Quango jobs are growing in number fast enough to keep all the boys happy, or as the Duke himself put it: 'There is enough pasture for all the sheep.' In any case, keeping union bureaucrats happy with Quangos is only one small aspect of the corporate state which is now enveloping us. As Professor Pahl and J. T. Winkler, who have described the new corporatism in the most striking manner in *The Times*, put it, the system has nothing to do with justice, or equity or law. It is 'a comprehensive economic system in which the state directs and controls predominantly privately-owned business according to four principles: unity, order, nationalism and success.' They add: 'In order to guard against latent anarchy, submission of the particular interest to the general will is a corporatist principle, collaboration at work a duty. . . The corporatist value is discipline, not liberty: the corporatist vice is licence, not compulsion.' Hence Corporatism is 'a collectivist system, not an individualistic one. National economic performance has moral primacy over personal affluence or mobility. "Individualism" is a label for stigmatising recalcitrance, not eulogising freedom . . . it puts greater value on achieving targets than on the maintenance of legal rights and processes.' Therefore it involves 'the rejection of the rule of law'.

We have certainly been warned where we are heading. But Labour MPs, even those who ought to know better, disregard or affect to disbelieve such admonitions. Of course, most of them, in one way or another, are dependent on union approval for their seats. Take, for instance, David Marquand, a middle-class intellectual, heavily beholden to the miners' vote in his safe seat of Ashfield. Writing in the *Guardian* – of all papers – he accepts the loss of freedom and the erosion of parliamentary democracy with complacency rather than resignation:

> . . . corporate power is now a fact whether we like it or not. Governments can propose as much as they like but in the end it is the

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> great producer groups that dispose . . . Governments that try to force their policies down the throats of the producer groups will fail, and deserve to fail. And the only alternative to force is negotiation . . . To try to dismantle the Corporate State and return to the imaginary golden age of parliamentary supremacy, in the way that some Liberals and Conservatives want to do, would be a foolish and destructive waste of energy.

Just so, in their time, did pusillanimous men justify Munich.

And what of the people? It is, of course, the thesis of the bureaucratic brothers that they represent the people; that what they are doing, in erecting their private empires, in extending their bureaucratic control and grabbing jobs for their boys, in remorselessly driving their juggernaut over the prostrate bodies of individual men and women, that all this is done by, with, for and in the name of the people. Jack Jones, who might well be described as the Louis XIV of the trade union takeover, has seemingly convinced himself that '*Le peuple, c'est moi!*' – or, as General Amin put it, 'De people am me!' But all the available evidence suggests that, at a time when so many members of the Establishment – ministers and MPs, dons and civil servants, experts and publicists – are hurrying to pay their respects to the new totalitarianism, and sell their shares in individual liberty, the ordinary decent people of Britain are strongly opposed to rule by trade union bureaucrats.

I defy the Emperor Jones, or any other trade union tycoon, to produce a single scientific opinion poll or survey, taken during the last ten years, which lends any support for the assertion that their corporatist views represent the majority of the British people. And if they will not accept the authority of polls, let us, for instance, have a national referendum on the subject of the closed shop. After all, the union bosses are not opposed to referenda; they strongly advocated one, and they got their way, on the subject of British membership of the EEC. Is not the closed shop, in terms of everyday life, just as important? Is there any reason why ordinary British men and women should not pronounce on the subject? Of course the union brothers will refuse. *They know they would lose.* And not only lose; they would lose heavily, overwhelmingly. Gone, once and for all, would be their arrogant claim to speak for the people. But, however hopeless, I think it is right that this challenge to a referendum should be put to them. At least it would help to expose them for what they are. Not a group of idealists. Not men who devote their lives to the welfare of all. Not even ideologues. But, rather, an ugly factional interest, like any other which has stained the pages of history, operating at the expense of the community, and motivated by an insatiable lust for personal power, and by enormous greed.

Donald Gould

Monkeying About with Man

Scientists, politicians, and the rest of us are being astoundingly and stupidly complacent in the face of the rapidly developing technology which permits an interference with the nature of living organisms, and therefore, perhaps, with the whole pattern of life on earth, including that of man.

A government report, published last week, recommended the adoption of a few modest precautions to be observed by the scientists who are tinkering with genes. But the new rules are aimed only at reducing the chances of any monstrous new life-forms which these latter-day Frankensteins might create escaping from the laboratory and becoming a menace to us all. Nothing was said about whether such perilous work should be undertaken at all.

But the report did at least amount to an official British acknowledgment of the fact that genetic engineering (as the craft is euphemistically termed) *is* dangerous. And within days, news from the US reminded us just how dangerous it could be. Professor Har Gobind Khorana, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (a richly funded and brilliantly staffed think-tank which has done much within recent years to increase our capacity to destroy ourselves) announced that he and his team had not only built a gene, from simple and readily available chemical components, but had managed to insert this artificially created spare part of the life machine into the works of a bacterium, so that, thereafter, the germ concerned behaved in a different fashion. And not only that – all its progeny inherited the difference.

Genes are the pieces of punched tape, tightly coiled in the nucleus of a cell, which direct how the fundamental machinery of that cell shall operate. The fertilised egg from a woman turns into a boy or a girl, rather than a camel or a banana tree, solely because of the instructions encoded upon the punched tape the fertilised egg contains. And the boy or girl who results from these instructions is short or tall, blond or brunet, clever or dull, and even, perhaps, good or evil, as a result of tiny variations in the pattern of that tape.

So the possibility of altering the pattern, and thus the nature of the animal or plant or germ produced, has an enormous excitement and appeal for the molecular biologists involved in such work. It promises them something of the power of God.

There can, of course, be benefits, and they could be large. A few food crops are so constituted that they can make use of the ample nitrogen in the atmosphere, but most, including the cereals upon which we so much depend, have to obtain this essential element from nitrates in the soil. And since many soils – especially those which have been farmed intensively – are poor in nitrogen, millions of tons of fertilisers have to be spread over the ground each year. This costs a lot of money, and is an operation beyond the means of the poorest people who are most in need of cheaper, richer harvests, and also poisons the waters draining from highly fertilised land. It would solve the world food problem almost overnight, and go a long way to solving our energy problems (fertilisers need enormous quantities of energy for their manufacture) if the means could be found for inserting the piece of punched tape into the cells of rice and wheat which would program them for using nitrogen from the air.

A number of genetic diseases might be corrected by replacing the faulty patches on the chromosomes. Bacteria could well be modified and their chemistry altered in such a way that they produced hormones like insulin, and a whole range of valuable biological materials. The juggling with genes, and observing the results on the behaviour of the doctored cells, would be a powerful means for increasing our understanding of the way living mechanisms are regulated, including the causes of cancer, or even why it is we age and die.

But there are frightful risks involved as well. The most immediate involve bacteria. Because they are relatively simple organisms, and because they reproduce very quickly, most of the experimental work on altering genes has been done on bacteria. They have had pieces of punched tape from other organisms, including viruses, incorporated into their being, and now, at MIT, they have had wholly artificial genes stapled into their regulating mechanism.

This would be fine if the experimenters really knew what they were doing, but they don't. They are highly skilled at performing their molecular conjuring tricks, except for the fact that they are never quite sure what the colour of the rabbit that comes out of the hat will be. They might produce a new kind of germ of surpassing virulence, or make an existing and dangerous germ resistant to antibiotics. It is this kind of danger, and this kind alone, which the recommendations in last week's government report were designed to minimise. The real threat lies in the possibility that the techniques at present being used so successfully upon bacteria will be developed and applied to man.

It will become possible to breed colonies of identical humans. It has been done with frogs, and an Oxford biologist is well on the way to doing it with rabbits. It will become possible to manipulate human genes to produce people of a chosen degree of passivity or ferocity, or what you will. It will become possible to upset the balance of nature in a manner which would have possibly catastrophic consequences.

Senior and respected scientists tend to dismiss such fears, not denying that such things *could* be done, but asking who would possibly think it worth doing. Well, last week a Cambridge conference was told by an Australian scientist how he had received two letters from colleagues in Moscow urging him to try to mate man with gorillas or chimps. That is good enough reason for considering a complete moratorium on research into genetic engineering until we have had ample time to consider where it may all be leading.

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London Diary

☐ What happened in Notting Hill on Monday night was not what we usually mean by a race riot. The two sides in the otherwise confused battle were clearly the police and a number of black hooligans. I have seen no reports of white civilians being set upon in any general or systematic way, only casually, which is bad enough, God knows, but not as bad as might have been. Significantly, there was a good deal of damage to property, with shops being looted not, as it looks, because they were white-owned, but because they were there. The immediate cause of the trouble was the mere presence of the police, ample 'provocation' to any mindless yobbo of any colour with a grudge against authority. By the nature of things, authority in these islands has a white face and it is here that the racial question insists on entering the argument. What we do about that in the end I don't know; what we can do for the moment, I suppose, is to be clear in our minds that the Notting Hill affair was closer to a soccer riot than an assault by one race on another *as such*; bad enough, again, but not the worst.

☐ As a member of the Writers' Guild I automatically get *Writers News* (yes, the Guild still has an apostrophe, the *News* hasn't, and very trendy and illiterate its heading looks). The August number leads with a vigorous attack on BBC and ITV film policy by one John Briley, an American scriptwriter working in this country. Part of his case seems undeniable, that both networks show a lot of old movies which receive 'profligate' (?prodigal) advertising, and that this policy damages our own TV and film industries and even the commercial theatre, all three of which, as he rightly says, have a distinctive contribution to make to our national life. It is when Mr Briley sets out to show just who and what is affected by excessive old-moviedom that his arguments carry less weight with me. Who benefits from the policy? he asks, and gives a long list of those who don't, with the public in the last-and-least position. Yet we find later that the reason why purchased films appeal to the powers that be, apart from their cheapness, is that they 'have been so successful in drawing audiences'. In other words, people watch them a lot because they enjoy them – people like me for one. Who in his senses, who but a television critic would for instance have rejected ITV's recent Saturday offering, *The Professionals*, a rousing action film with Burt Lancaster, Lee Marvin, Claudia Cardinale *et al*, in favour of the competing 'Ballet Class' or 'Seaside Special'?

☐ If Mr Briley had gone on to argue that planners of TV programmes, like film producers, persistently undervalue the public's adaptability, their readiness to give the unfamiliar a trial, and that therefore they are stinted without knowing it, he would have been saying something useful. But his concern is reserved for 'the television writers, actors, directors and technicians who sit idle during all the hours the films are being played' (and also, to be fair, their equivalents in the film industry and the theatre): these are the ones who suffer. Television, then, is seen to exist for the benefit not of the public but of those who work in it, a philosophy familiar enough to anyone who travels by public transport, stays in hotels etc. etc. Mr Briley's remedy is not the production of TV plays and features so bloody good that everyone starts switching over to them and away from the old movies, but industrial action to force a change in the present system. Perhaps, though Mr Briley doesn't say so, a stage would be reached at which those who work in television can decide what shall be shown on it; that's familiar too, eh? Well, actors, directors and others may decide to join battle, but (not that it would make any difference) I don't think many writers apart from Mr Briley are likely to. They are far too lazy, selfish and envious to make sacrifices for a common cause. Yes, I know I ought to know.

☐ It's not too late, I hope, to offer a small garland of bays to mark John Betjeman's birthday. I was interested to see that all – all I read, at least – of the earlier tributes stressed the darker side of the poet's work, its deep melancholy, profound despair and the like. It does show those qualities, now and then to a harrowing degree: pieces like 'Remorse' and 'Five o'Clock Shadow' transmit a pang of dread and distress not to be soon thrown off. And some restoration of the balance is certainly called for, some sort of apology for years of patronising dismissal as a competent and amusing mannerist with a teddy-bear connection. But there's no need to plunge too far. Betjeman at his most characteristic is an entrancing companion, taking you on a stroll along a disused canal, past a Victorian chapel, through a Surrey garden, and showing you, by the affectionate piling-up of detail, what you have never seen before, showing you too that there are and were lives here that you have never considered. At their best, these unemphatic revelations can take a sudden poignant turn no other writer can quite match, as when the comic wooer of brawny tennis-playing Pam sees forward to his moment of triumph and joy:

> Over the redolent pinewoods, in at the bathroom casement,
> One fine Saturday, Windlesham bells shall call:
> Up the Butterfield aisle rich with Gothic enlacement,
> Licensed now for embracement,
> Pam and I, as the organ
> Thunders over you all.

☐ 'Libya takes its place as chairman of the UN Security Council,' reports *The Times*. With all due deference to the interesting tear-out supplement on that country the NS printed last week, 'it' and 'its' strike me as pretty exalted pronouns to apply to Ghaddafi's Libya – but this takes me from my purpose. In the last 20 years or so, 'it' and 'its' have in most contexts driven out 'she' and 'her' when a nation-state is being referred to, even our own. A speaker or writer is understood to be making a studied appeal to old-fashioned sentiment if he chooses the old form. In rather the same way, people will talk of 'the British' (instead of 'our') system of law or education as if they had acquired Paraguayan citizenship overnight. This is no mere linguistic shift, worthy of discussion alongside the misuse of an adverb; could there be a more revealing or sadder indication of how our attitudes to our country have changed in these last few years? 'Britain' – not much of a word at the best of times – has become a government plus something for it to govern, a state without a nation, a place. I wonder if modern sailors refer to their ship as 'it': any captain hearing his crew do so would be well advised to look to the state of the dinghy.

☐ 'Of course it'll be Carter,' said my middle-of-the-road American friend. 'And that's the way it should be. He's going to give the people as near as he can exactly what they want. Some of that's because he's a very serious, conscientious man who believes in representing the electors, and the rest is because he'd like a second term, naturally. And giving the people what they want means there'll be no change of any kind, nothing nationalised, not a single serviceman brought home – do you imagine any of them *want* to be brought home, with the privileges they and their families get out there? So you and your lot can take a little heart. No, Carter's about as radical as Eisenhower. So why not Ford? Oh, because Carter's bright and funny, not quite so much as his mother, who'd actually make a better president if she had the chance; still, compared to Ford . . . Put it this way: if Carter says to an underling: "Get on to your job or you don't come to dinner" the fellow says to himself: "I'd better wake up or we'll miss those parties." With Ford it'd be: "Thank God we don't have to go around there any more".'

Kingsley Amis

This England

Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ A lake the shape of the Queen's head, a Jubilee Hill at Speakers' Corner – or a chalk hillside cutout of a corgi! Results of the RIBA/BD Jubilee Competition: Pages 15-17. – *Building Design* (D. M. Mitchell)

☐ The plot – self-righteous young bonehead, JR, discovers that his toothy, sensitive girl has been raped by a previous admirer, is turned off, then agrees to forgive her, which is almost worse – looks commonplace enough. – *Observer* (C. Brown)

☐ But Mr Rees, who likes his present job more than might be expected, is relatively untried for one of the great traditional offices of state and rumours have grown, even in Belfast, that he might stay on yet again or move. – *Guardian* (D. Turton)

☐ Mr Philip Snell, of Mudford Sock, near Yeovil, the judge in the pig classes, fully appreciated the problem and only kept the entries in the ring for a minimum period. 'Pigs do not enjoy this sort of heat and go for the shade immediately' commented Mr Snell. 'The exhibitors should be congratulated for bringing pigs out in heat like this.' – *Bridport News* (V. Henry)

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Tim Albert

Blue-Rinse Tour

It was nine o'clock in the morning and the sun winked over the treetops in Golders Green as we sped on towards the north. There were 16 of us in a 40-seater coach: two elderly gentlemen and three elderly ladies from Australia, seven assorted North American matrons, a tall and earnest girl from Holland, Martin the guide and Norman the driver and myself, all heading off on what some friends of mine irreverently call a 'blue-rinse tour'. This particular one was being organised by Frames, cost £7.20 per ageing head, and did Coventry Cathedral and the Washington Country between breakfast and dinner. The where?, asked my friends, who, like me, hadn't realised, even in this bicentennial year, that there actually was a Washington Country this side of the Atlantic.

In fact, it turned out to be situated conveniently near the M1, somewhere to the West of Daventry. But first, presumably as some kind of bonus, we were taken to Northampton, where among the drab bricks of the town centre, just across from the auction rooms of James and James, there is a rare 12th-century round church.

The incumbent canon, who usually meets the weekly tour in person, happened to be away, so we had the first reserves to show us round: a former churchwarden ('All right, Mum, they're all in now') and his wife, who did the talking, dressed up for the occasion in a yellow suit with frilly sleeves and shining white gloves. Among other things, she pointed out the early English Perpendicular arch (once used to store spears and banners, now used for hiding rubbish), the belfry (with an appeal just launched for new ropes) and the guide-books (just 12½p each). 'The Bishop of Connecticut is a personal friend of mine and he'd just love to hear that story,' enthused one of the American matrons after a long and somewhat involved account of one of the vicars who kept refusing to do a baptism because he was keeping his bait in the font.

Next a short drive to the village of Great Brington, where Lawrence, great-great-great-grandfather of George Washington, lies buried. He had come to the village from Sulgrave Manor (which we were scheduled to see later in the day) after the family had fallen on bad times. This time the vicar was there, in an open-necked M. & S. shirt and brown suede shoes, and sounding like a cross between an Alan Bennett clergyman and a Ronnie Barker East End wide-boy. 'It was from here that the Washington family emigrated to the states,' he said. 'We feel very proud about that and I'm sure you do too. If you want to hear more about it, and here I'll do my little plug, we have some new and very good guide-books. The only thing that's missing is a picture of Lawrence's tomb, so I'll put in a postcard of that, and you can have the lot for 20p . . .' (Well, he told me later, he had just had one of the church windows repaired, and that, with VAT, had come to over £4,000.)

Steak and kidney luncheon at the Regent Hotel, Royal Leamington Spa, one of those scuffed provincial hotels with elegant menus and clumsy adolescent waiters. My companions turned out to be a pretty experienced lot: a lady from 'Birkley' ('I refuse to pronounce it Barklay') had already done Windsor, Greenwich, Stratford and the Roman Wall; a lady from Brooklyn had done Wales, York, Guildford and the West End stores. 'It's getting so much more expensive now,' she said. 'And you have all those Indians over here. I sometimes wonder just where I am.'

No doubt she felt more at home when we got to Coventry Cathedral. Among the usual attractions of the building is a smallish exhibition, supplied by a county called Macomb somewhere in Michigan. Its exhibits include one from the Warren Police Department. *Item*: helicopters have opened up a new frontier in the never-ending battle for safe streets. *Item*: it should be noted that all shooting is done with a man-sized silhouette target. *Item*: officers also clean their own bikes . . . It has been found that this also increased moral [*sic*] among officers of the bureau.

Tea is taken in what the guide book calls a 'quaint cottage restaurant', thatched, croquet-lawned, and with real horses passing the lattice windows. 'Is this cream?' asks one of the American ladies. 'What do you do with it?' 'I've seen so many cathedrals,' says another, 'but that one really sticks out.' 'Where we come from,' says a third, 'they keep on pulling down buildings just as soon as they put them up. There's nothing historical.'

On to Sulgrave Manor, home of the Washingtons some time before they went broke, and some more time before young George made good. The house was bought in the year that the first world war broke out, to mark 100 years of peace between the United States and the United Kingdom, and is administered by the British Ambassador in Washington and the American Ambassador in London. Outside, the stars and stripes flutter; inside, remnants of 16th-century British life sit uncomfortably alongside Washington memorabilia (a lock of hair, his keys, a saddle bag). On sale at the exit are little bags filled with lavender from the garden (15p), and charts showing the declaration of independence and Washington's family pedigree (£1.25 plus one free copy with printer's error).

Homewards. Martin the guide, who turns out to be a graduate in Middle Eastern Studies from Cambridge, tells me that it has been one of the easier tours. 'Try Westminster Abbey on a Saturday morning,' he says. 'That must be the nearest thing to the Black Hole of Calcutta – if we were animals the RSPCA would ban it on the grounds of cruelty.' At 7.40 we pull into the centre of the capital, last point of interest being London Weekend Television ('Home of *Upstairs, Downstairs*'). Goodbye and thank you, they all say, shaking the driver and the guide by the hand. Martin and Norman count their tips, for which they are politely but not effusively grateful. After all, shared heritage or not, business is business.

First Person

Arthur Marshall

Pleased To Meet You

Somerset Maugham (a very much kinder man, incidentally, than several of those who have seen fit to write about him have chosen to indicate) used to express surprise at the ordinary person's keenness to make the acquaintance of those who, in this weird world, rank as eminent and famous. I suspect that he was only surprised because he had already met most of them himself, had been amused by their egocentricity, their imperfections and, possibly, their dullness, and was amazed that anybody could wish to seek them out. But a desire in the humble to hobnob with notabilities seems to me to be perfectly natural, however brief and sketchy the hobnobbing may be.

Five years ago I spent a delightful month staying with kind American theatrical friends on the fringe of a small village in a remote part of Wisconsin. It was the highest of high summers, with temperatures in the 90s and I spent much of my time in and around the pool, surrounded by chipmunks, those charming North American squirrels who, in their appearance and quick movements, remind one so vividly of the late Nellie Wallace. The chipmunks were wary of me as long as I was dressed but, stripped for the pool and splashing about in it, they accepted me at once and made friendly overtures. They obviously thought that I was a species of outsize, pink hippopotamus. Part of my agreeable daily routine was to visit the village. The movies had prepared me for it. It was like every one-horse town you've ever seen. There was a sleepy saloon with swing doors, a bank (open Tuesdays and Thursdays), a general store, a tiny hotel, a church, an old-timer snoozing in a rocking-chair, a few houses. The only things missing were galloping hooves, bullets and Gary Cooper.

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Everywhere there was extreme friendliness. Small children said 'Hi!' and giggled at my answering 'Good afternoon'. The man in the bank said 'Howdy!' and, in return, received 'Good morning' from me. In the general store (a staff of three) I made a big success. They found my English accent continually fascinating. Whenever I appeared, the staff and customers crowded round me to hear and marvel at it, and an aged grandmother was summoned from upstairs to join in the excitement. As time went on, they plied me with questions. Did I know Tom Jones? I hesitate for a moment between the book, the operette and the film, and then I realised that they meant the pop singer, a great star on American television. 'No, alas,' I said. Did I know Lulu, another telly hit? 'I'm afraid not,' I said. Worried looks. But surely I must know the Queen? I couldn't bear to disappoint them further. 'Yes,' I said, 'but only to wave to.' 'And does she wave back?' 'Oh yes, indeed,' I said. This, with them, clearly ranked as hobnobbing and formed an entirely satisfactory and cosy relationship. I do not know what picture they had in their minds. Perhaps they saw me bowling up the Mall and waving from an open car, with the Queen rattling up a Palace window, leaning out with a merry 'Yoo-hoo!', and waving, waving, until I was out of sight.

I find it quite an agreeable pastime, when feeling momentarily lonely or neglected, to hasten to my small cyclopaedia (just the one volume) and let the imagination fly in a riot of hobnobbing with famous human beings of a kind well outside my range. The cyclopaedia contains a section called Prominent People, gathered together by who knows what inventive brain, and listing the widest possible range of interesting historical availabilities: one's social life blossoms immediately. How about a Woman of the Year luncheon with Grace Darling, Cleopatra, Peg Woffington, Florence Nightingale and Boadicea? Guest of Honour Lady Macbeth (how delightful to find that her Christian name was Gruoch, 'Grouch' for fun, and that they enjoyed 17 years of ill-gotten sovereignty). The list's compiler is, by the way, handy with brisk thumbnail sketches – Louis XV ('most licentious'). Louis XVI ('apathetic and unfortunate') – and, goodness me, the people one has been *missing* all these years: Lord Armstrong, whose new-fangled gun mowed them down so splendidly in the Crimea: Lablache, who taught Queen Victoria how to sing: Cerdic the Saxon who, a striking figure in woad, conquered the Isle of Wight in 530.

For a really grand male dinner party, you've got to be extra careful with your *placements* (a word, did you know, that no Frenchman ever uses). You shouldn't put Attila (who must, at all costs, be kept off red meat) next to the Venerable Bede, who will be peckish after his strictly monastic fare. Why not sandwich between them Sir Raymond Unwin, who dreamt up those attractive Garden Suburbs? Alcibiades, Socrates's chum, would fit in anywhere and could keep an eye on Rasputin, who can't be trusted with anything on two, or four, legs. At the head of the table? Tutankhamen, of course. And at the bottom, well below the salt, poor old Watts-Dunton, an odd choice and whose only real claim to fame was to keep Swinburn off the bottle. For a floor-show, what about Blondin walking precariously overhead to a musical accompaniment ('Come, Tannhäuser, give us one of your minne-songs!')?

As new editions of the cyclopaedia appear, names come and go from the list. People considered prominent one minute are woefully unprominent the next and right out on their ear. Recently vanished are the Very Rev. Cyril Alington, once a remarkable headmaster of Eton where he floated about saintlike in claret-coloured canonicals, and with him Euclid (what's *he* done to get dropped?), Peter Dawson, the rumbly baritone, Ivor Novello, Van Loon (Dutch historian), Marie Corelli and, to show no snobbish favouritism, the Liberal 8th Duke of Devonshire. The saddest expulsion of all is that of dear old Ethelwulf, our sovereign in 837, who, after 1,139 years of glorious prominence, now sinks away into total oblivion.

There are, of course, assorted newcomers – Lord Clark, Paul Robeson, Harold Wilson, and so on, and one of them is really rather unexpected. One shouldn't, I suppose, criticise, and uninvited too, a cyclopaedia's taste, and I dare say that I am old-fashioned, but I do find it rather shaking to discover, on a page which includes W. W. Jacobs, a French loom inventor, Henry James, a Mogul emperor and Amy Johnson, the name of Jesus Christ, just one remove from that of Jerome K. Jerome, who wrote *Three Men in a Boat*. Quite a straightforward entry ('. . . said to be miraculously conceived . . . He was later crucified') of 16 lines. Hitler gets 25. Oh well.

Letters to the Editor

Moonman's Socialism

Sir, Eric Moonman (NS 27 August) has at last discovered the reasons for the Labour Party's declining electoral popularity since the war: it's those left-wing MPs again, and their 'language of envy'. It appears that the Labour Party is 'being used' by some – who are not named – 'for *reviving* the class war'. This will no doubt come as cheering news for many socialists from Wapping to Aberdeen – not to mention certain writers on the *Daily Telegraph*.

It seems, however, that Eric Moonman, having discovered this hitherto unknown piece of information, actually disapproves. There are those in the party he tells us (although he adds that most of them are probably Trots anyway) who are not content to oppose the present Administration – they are actually *rude* about it. They show 'little or no tolerance of what Labour's leaders are trying to do,' and to make matters worse they suffer from 'intemperance of language'. Leaving aside the writer's squeamishness in the face of strong political terminology, one might reasonably ask: how can any socialist 'tolerate' what Labour's leaders are trying to do, when that is simply to make capitalism run efficiently at the expense of the working class? 'The electorate,' says Moonman, 'understands perfectly well the economic difficulties we face'. That must be even more cheering news for the chaps at the *Telegraph* – so now we can all pull together to restore the capitalists' rate of profit, even if that does involve a temporary lull in living standards. After all: 'The essence of the Labour Party has never been to revive the class war – it has been to extinguish it . . .'

In the face of all this good will to everyone except the Labour Left, it seems churlish to quibble. Nevertheless, there are one or two questions cleared up neither by Moonman, nor by the newly-messianic Callaghan who, it appears, 'can give us inspiration without insurrection'.

First, how can one 'extinguish' the class war without abolishing that system of production which makes it both possible and inevitable – i.e. capitalism? Secondly, how *is* this system to be transformed into a socialist one without involving, at the very least, some impoliteness towards some of its agents – whether they be labelled 'Labour' or 'Conservative'? Finally, if the Labour Party is to play any part other than a regressive one in this process, will it not have to listen a little more attentively to those rare left-wing MPs who find it difficult to remain courteous in the face of the paralysis of the official Labour movement?

Who knows, if it could manage to listen to *them*, it might even come round to hearing some of the people they try to represent.

ALAN WALL

University of Dundee

Sir, In spite of the heading 'The Language of Socialism' I looked in vain to discover what it was from the writing of Eric Moonman. The article breathes the hatred and intolerance which are denounced.

Socialists hate *things* not people. We hate the system of exploitation for personal gain but recognise that hatred is destructive when we aim at constructing a sound and just basis for a different society. None of the four resolutions he cites shows intolerance or hatred. They all attempt to bring constructive socialist thought to issues.

Those like myself (and I have worked for 50 years in the party) have always thought that a Labour government wanted to change, fundamentally, the basis of present society. Support for the party, the decline of which your correspondent deplores, as I do, will be increased when the Labour Government is *seen* to be attempting to change the face of capitalism. Many of us believe that it is because there is such obvious reluctance on the part of many spokesmen for the party to show their actions equalling their words in speeches and in programmes, that thousands of members have left the party.

Two other points. 'The electorate understands perfectly well the economic difficulties we face,' Mr Moonman writes. But does the Government understand the economic difficulties facing those who voted them into government? If so, it is not very obvious. If the government are intent on solving a capitalist crisis in a capitalist way, using the old capitalist methods, before it begins to implement the policies of which the democratically elected National Executive Council have reminded the Government about from time to time, can one rightly expect those who feel the brunt, *all the time*, of 'economic difficulties', to remain placid and human beings without guts?

In my opinion, as secretary of the Surrey County Labour Party and political education officer of my own North West Surrey CLP, Eric Moonman is less than honest when he writes deploring intolerance and intemperance

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in language and then uses both in articles of this character.

DON MCGREGOR

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Sir, How can intelligent Labour supporters believe that the Labour Party is pledged to support and further state education when the leader, Mr Callaghan, has failed to persuade his own daughter? This coming term a Labour Prime Minister's grandchildren are being educated at a private school at £300 a term.

What baffles me is how he has persuaded me to send *my* children to a state school and yet not persuaded his own daughter to do likewise.

DONALD CHURCHILL

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The Occupied Countryside

Sir, It is not only the middle classes who may feel they want protection from a Bill of Rights ('An Occupied Country', by Christopher Hitchens, 27 August) but also the working class as they are far more often innocent victims of irrational union campaigns than the middle classes, who are better equipped to look after themselves.

I live and work in the country and as a result come into contact with the agricultural worker, and there is little doubt over the last year he has been the victim of a quite extraordinary union campaign. I refer to the campaign to 'Abolish the Tied Cottage' which has now been brought to a successful conclusion by the NUAAW. This may have made some sense when there were evictions 50 or 60 years ago and rent and rates in the country districts were almost nothing, but now that rents for council houses in Norfolk have risen to £10 a week and rates have risen accordingly, the farm worker is only too aware of the financial benefit of living rent free in a good house near his place of work with no travelling expenses. Why abolish an economic benefit that few other workers enjoy? However, such is the petty tyranny exercised by the union over its members that an NUAAW district secretary told me that he had actually been made to send off a letter to the local press purporting to have been written by him, but actually written by someone in headquarters in London, about some harrowing and completely untrue story concerning an eviction which he was alleged to have witnessed.

As a liberal I was always brought up to believe that unions were on the whole a positive force for good, but this last story has finally convinced me that they have become extremely dangerous institutions.

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The Nuclear Threat

Sir, Walter Patterson ('Exporting Armageddon', NS 27 August) has given an excellent account of one aspect of the threat of nuclear weapon proliferation: the rapid world-wide spread of civil nuclear power plants, and particularly of plutonium reprocessing facilities. But that is hardly the whole story. No country is going to develop nuclear weapons simply because it has the technical means to do so, in the shape of a civil nuclear industry – any more than it will develop conventional armaments *simply* because it has a steel industry. The decision to 'go nuclear' also depends on the belief that nuclear weapons will prove politically or militarily useful to the state in question – a belief which is legitimised by the importance which the existing nuclear powers attach to their own nuclear weapons.

Any serious effort to halt and reverse the tide of nuclear weapon proliferation must therefore involve action not merely to restrain the nuclear export business but also to devalue nuclear weapons as instruments of policy, and to achieve world-wide nuclear disarmament. At present the nuclear weapon states – through the Nuclear Suppliers Group and unilaterally, as in the USA's recent pressure on South Korea and Pakistan not to buy French reprocessing facilities – are attempting to achieve the former without the latter. This is a policy which is grossly hypocritical ('Nuclear weapons are useful to us, but they'll be bad for you'); unrealistic, in believing that the present division of the world between nuclear and non-nuclear powers can be indefinitely frozen; unacceptably discriminatory, at a time when developing countries are sharply challenging the historical division of labour between the primary producers of the 'South' and the high-technology societies of the 'North'; and ineffective, in that no state with the political will to develop nuclear weapons will be prevented from doing so simply because it cannot import the technology ready-made.

Restraining nuclear exports and improving safeguards may, of course, buy a little time – but there can be no lasting solution to the problem of nuclear weapon proliferation except in the context of nuclear disarmament. Last week's British nuclear test is a depressing reminder that the Government has yet to appreciate this obvious truth. Until it does so, its diplomatic alarms about nuclear proliferation, and its activities in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, will count for very little.

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A Case for School Vouchers

Sir, Christopher Hitchens's excellent article 'Educating Our Masters' (NS 20 August) contains two assumptions which are all the more puzzling because the rest of his thoughts are distinguished by lucidity and fact.

Is the reduction of public expenditure really incompatible with the introduction of a voucher system and would the marrying of these give us sink schools and racial ghettos? On the contrary, I believe the decentralisation of finance, each school managing its own voucher income, would cut the fat that is inevitably the result of supply from outside – those familiar with state school administration will recognise the present lack of cost consciousness; the over-ordering of books, teachers who do not teach, high-cost subjects for which demand is small. Competition for pupils and the lowering of geographic barriers would have the opposite effect envisaged by Mr Hitchens. Why should only middle-class parents be able to recognise good schools? And what school could remain 'bad' if all the teachers and pupils were fleeing?

Secondly, is the supply of schooling inelastic? Ingenuity and enterprise, if rewarded, would enlarge supply as it has always done. Everyone would not want Eton but the NEW STATESMAN, least of all journals, should not forget that the tragedy of the working man was once the poverty of his aspirations.

MARJORIE SELDON
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Jobs for the NAW-Boys

Sir, J. K. Galbraith has got the main argument precisely right in his discussion of NAW (NS 13 August). This Nationalism/Anti-communism/Warfare cabal is indeed the formidable force in our affairs inexorably pushing public opinion and political action toward lethal consequences. But he has an important detail quite wrong, when he writes of the magnates advising President Johnson on disastrous policies in Vietnam that 'the political beaches are now covered with their bodies.' Far from it. These consulting architects of an illegal and immoral war arise from the wreckage clothed in honours and gold.

Item: Richard Helms, ex-Director, Central Intelligence Agency, now Ambassador to Iran.

Item: McGeorge Bundy, ex-Special Assistant to the President for National Affairs, now president, the Ford Foundation.

Item: Hubert Humphrey, ex-Vice-President of the United States, now US Senator.

Item: Ellsworth Bunker, ex-Ambassador to Vietnam, now Ambassador at Large.

Item: William Bundy, ex-Deputy Secretary of Defence, now Editor, *Foreign Affairs*.

Item: Robert S. McNamara, ex-Secretary of Defence, now President, World Bank.

Others have gone to prestigeful Washington law firms and corporations, e.g., Joseph Califano, Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, still others to great universities, e.g., Dean Rusk, W. W. Rostow.

The Vietnam war would at least have yielded some slight satisfaction if it had in fact driven those directly responsible out of public life, into shame and obscurity. But, as Galbraith faultlessly points out, NAW takes care of its own, and in this case it is sad to report that some of the most wrongheaded of the participants in the débâcle in Indochina are now awaiting recall into public service after November.

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A. J. P. Taylor and Suez

Sir, A. J. P. Taylor, at the time of the Suez crisis in 1956, held the view that 'for me the canal was Egyptian and the British, or rather Anglo-French, threats against Egypt were not different from Hitler's threats against Poland' (London Diary 20 August). The analogy is false. The old British garrisons in Egypt really did feel that they were guardians of an international waterway which, if it fell into other hands, might be (and indeed was) closed to world shipping. The Polish Corridor, however, was intended to ensure a single country's (Poland's) access to the sea down the Vistula, and as such had only local significance as a rail- and waterway. Hitler, moreover, intended (and tried to) uproot or exterminate a whole population of native Poles from the Corridor, which puts his threats into a different category from those of British and French politicians who were disputing ownership of a mere piece of engineering.

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Left Books Live On

Sir, I read the recent article (NS 6 August) and letters about the Left Book Club with great interest. I would like to remark that recently in London I saw the actual half-crown orange books on sale in some bookshops not a mile from Maiden Lane, King Street and the LSE (where I study) at prices ranging from £1 to £2.50 each. I collect and also read these books and learn much about Britain in the Thirties. With such attractive prices — and they will no doubt rise -- I wonder when I shall be able to enter my collection for auction at Sotheby's.

OLAFUR GEORGSSON

Reykjavik, Iceland

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BOOKS & ARTS

John Carey

How the Style Refines

The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh edited by Michael Davie *Weidenfeld* £7.95

Evelyn Waugh's *Diaries* are, predictably, snobbish, malicious, offensive and highly enjoyable. He met, and disliked, a great many people, and his pages crawl with squashed celebrities, from Noel Coward to Edmund Wilson. Beverley Nichols ('a mercenary, hypochondriacal flibbertigibbet') is a typical casualty. So is Edith Sitwell, whom Waugh found 'wholly ignorant'. She informed him that port was made from methylated spirit: 'she knew this for a fact because her charwoman told her.' Of Waugh's numerous loathesome acquaintances, Randolph Churchill emerges as arguably the least engaging. His rudeness to servants was habitual, and on one occasion during the war in Italy he expressly stopped his vehicle in order to urinate in front of some local women – 'Because,' he explained, 'I am a member of parliament.' Drunk or sober, his conversation was intolerable. To keep him quiet, Waugh once bet him £10 he could not read the Bible right through, whereupon Churchill set to work, persistently exclaiming 'God, isn't God a shit.' 'Randolph's coughing and farting,' Waugh feelingly notes, 'make him a poor companion in wet weather.' When Randolph eventually entered hospital to have a lung removed, and it was announced that the trouble was not malignant, Waugh observed that it was characteristic of modern science to find the only unmalignant part of Randolph and remove it.

Pen-portraits of this quality are a beguiling feature of the *Diaries*. More importantly, these 800 pages portray the evolution of a major novelist. True, there are gaps – quite apart from those left by editing out libellous matter. Waugh destroyed his undergraduate diaries, apparently because of their homosexual content. His humiliating first marriage, which ended after 12 months when his wife went off with a BBC news-editor, and the *Gilbert Pinfold* 'lunacy' of 1954, are also blanks. What remains is still totally absorbing. No parallel case comes to mind of so distinguished a writer leaving us, in its day-to-day form, the raw material of his novels. We follow Waugh from prep school, through Lancing, and his capers with the Bright Young People, to the self-proving treks in central Africa and the South American jungle during the Thirties, and then, with the outbreak of war, to Libya, the Battle of Crete, and Yugoslavia, where he was attached as liaison officer to Tito's partisans – a role for which his social prejudices and manner made him perhaps the least suitable choice in the British army.

Waugh's character, it seems, became warped quite early. His schoolboy reflections on the 'blatantly semitic' spectators at the Lancing-Brighton cricket match, the 'blatantly risen-from-the-ranks' officer who inspected the OTC, and the 'vile Southend trippers' who had the ill luck to share his railway compartment, all indicate traits that were to prove permanent – as do his feats of piggishness in the tuck-shop. His religious sensibilities appear in childhood, too: 'Went to church. We struck a horrible low one. I was the only person who crossed myself and bowed to the altar.' This, at the age of 11, foreshadows the conversion to Catholicism and the class attitudes that went with it. What did change – indeed, died – was the child's capacity for enthusiasm.

With young manhood came a sense of life's futility, which Waugh sought to exorcise, or reinforce, by grim bouts of drunkenness and dissipation (and by a half-hearted suicide attempt, in the course of which he swam out to sea, but turned back because of jellyfish). He and his friends spent much of the Twenties ingesting choice foodstuffs and fine wines, which were rapidly and regularly converted into streams of vomit. 'Never have I seen so many men being sick together . . . They threw about chairs and soda water syphons and lavatory seats' – this entry accurately conveys the tone of the period.

To voice his new bitterness, Waugh perfected a laconic rhetoric of denigration which becomes one of the chief pleasures of his style. At first it rises little above abuse: 'to Lord's, where the cricket was slow, and the crowd almost entirely made up of shits.' Even here, though, the judiciousness of 'almost entirely', coupled with 'shits', has a lively effect. And as the technique developed it enabled Waugh to convey his peculiar vision of people and places with speed and power – the Welsh school, where he taught in the Twenties, for instance, largely composed of pitch-pine, linoleum, and 'an army of housemaids who scurry about the passages laden with urine'; or Athens, seen on a trip in 1927 – 'all the drinks taste either of camphor or medicine and everything smells of drains.'

Like any style, it prevents much of the truth from being told. We hear nothing in the *Diaries* of Waugh's relationship with his God which, to judge from the punctiliousness of his religious observances, must have mattered to him deeply. The style also inhibits the expression of emotion. After the birth of his daughter in 1941, Waugh noted: 'The baby died shortly after my arrival. I saw her when she was dead – a blue, slatey colour. Poor little girl, she was not wanted.' What he felt, behind the meagre phrases, we have no way of judging. Likewise with the acid outbursts directed at his surviving children: we cannot tell whether his professions of disgust at their company are a requirement of the style, or whether he was indeed emotionally maimed.

Increasingly, the style's dominant function is to expose the absurdity of existence. People disintegrate into strings of incongruous attributes. 'She had a thick beard, a bald dog, a drunken husband, and a paederastic son' – that, for instance, is Waugh's way of commemorating a lady who entertained him in Scotland (and whose name Mr Davie has kindly erased). If freaks were not forthcoming, they had to be invented. In the footnotes to this edition, an aggrieved band of Waugh's acquaintances firmly disown the gallstones, weak bladders and other imperfections he wished on them. He became adept at wresting bizarre collocations from the most innocent landscape: 'went to see the phallic giant at Cerne Abbas. Two little girls with long bare legs sat on his testicles.' His forays into half-civilised continents gave additional scope to this faculty. In Africa, Waugh, like Conrad, found that humankind's attempts to impose significance upon chaos wore satisfyingly thin. Conrad's young Russian, in *Heart of Darkness*, cherishing his manual of seamanship in the depths of the jungle, is kin to the religious maniac Waugh met in the wilds of British Guiana, or the English lady he discovered in Abyssinia, wearing a large brooch presented to her father when Lord Mayor of London on the opening of Epping Forest.

Warfare, like foreign parts, offered a glimpse into chaos. The 1939-45 diaries give extensive coverage to the Dakar expedition, various commando operations, and the retreat from Crete. Throughout, the record of military disorganisation and incompetence is almost unbroken, and it is plain that Waugh took savage pleasure in chronicling it. His picture of the last days in Crete is unforgettable, with hordes of demoralised British troops streaming down the coast roads, and the C-in-C, General Freyberg, seated apathetically at the mouth of a cave, distributing half-cupfulls of sherry and signed photographs. Significantly when, a year or two later, news of the war began to improve, Waugh lost all interest in it.

Besides stirring the absurdist's imagination, battle gave Waugh an opportunity to prove his courage – a quality by which, again like Conrad, he set great store. He had long had worries on the subject. 'I am a contemptible, clever little coward,' he noted, desperately, at Lancing. For a man so censorious, and so enamoured of the aristocratic virtues, it was imperative that he should not lose caste in his own eyes by running away. Hence, perhaps, the strong contrast, in his account of the action in Crete, between his own coolness and the quivering panic of almost everyone else. Not that Waugh's courage is in doubt. A man of 40 who volunteers for parachute training, and makes two jumps, is patently braver than most. But Waugh's parading of his fearlessness in the Cretan affair seems overdone. Maybe he felt awkward about the fact that his unit eventually fought its way through the 'rabble' (i.e., allied troops) on the beaches, in order to board the available craft and escape. Or maybe resentment over his enforced resignation from the Commandos, which followed, led him to

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stress his soldierly mettle in this episode.

That he had to resign, despite his soapy letters to highly-placed friends, plainly riled him. He seems to have been surprised to find that he was considered inefficient and insubordinate as an officer, and that no one wanted to serve with him. Rather in the same way, he repeatedly complains on his birthdays that the expected multitude of gifts from loving friends has not arrived. It is one of his few winning traits, and perhaps a condition of his greatness as a writer, that he does not appear to have realised what an intolerable person he was.

A. J. P. Taylor

Soft-Nosed Torpedo

Asquith by STEPHEN KOSS *Allen Lane* £6.95

Most prime ministers provide good material for historians to fight over. Now that the disputes over Baldwin and Chamberlain have somewhat died down, Asquith heads the field. How did he reach 'that narrow street so many desire to tread, yet so few deserve to enter, the path that leads to No 10'? How did he become the most powerful peacetime Prime Minister of the 20th century? And how, after this achievement, was he ejected from office so ignominiously, bringing down the once-great Liberal party with him? Though his policies were often radical, he also enjoyed the reputation of a patrician – 'the last of the Romans'. When he fell, D. H. Lawrence lamented: 'It is the end of England. It is finished. England will never be England any more.' Others however saw him as a befuddled old man – in Churchill's phrase, 'supine, sodden and supreme' – who spent his time in Cabinet writing letters to his young lady friends.

Asquith has had a good press biographically, culminating in the sympathetic life of him by Roy Jenkins, which has been sometimes hailed as a classic. Jenkins perhaps resembled Asquith too much to see his faults as well as his virtues. Stephen Koss is more detached. He provides no references to his sources – a decision I applaud if the alternative was to have the notes at the end of the book. In fact Koss has used many new sources – the diaries of Liberal politicians and of course Asquith's letters to Venetia Stanley, which like other closely-guarded secrets prove to be less sensational than was expected. Koss's book is not perfect. As is the way of historians, he sometimes overrates the importance of his own discoveries. He fights battles with other historians who are not worth his powder and shot. He also goes astray occasionally on details, attributing to Balliol non-existent cloisters and to the elder Pitt alcoholic habits that belonged to his son. On a larger scale I think Koss fails to emphasise how really great the Liberal party was in its last tenure of power and how great Asquith was as its leader. After all, Asquith presided unchallenged over a true Ministry of All the Talents. There has been none since. However, this is the best biography of Asquith yet to be written and a book indispensable to every lover of political history.

Koss makes a good personal point about Asquith at the outset. There were two Asquiths. The first was 'Herbert', the stolid Yorkshire Nonconformist who married a Yorkshire girl of equally humble origin. Margot, Asquith's second wife, said of her predecessor: 'Helen was no wife for him. She lived in Hampstead and had no clothes.' Asquith was on the way to becoming 'Henry' even before Helen Asquith died of typhoid. His marriage to Margot Tennant completed the process. Many thought Margot had ruined him. Campbell-Bannerman, for instance, said: 'Asquith *qua* Asquith is a fine fellow, an honest man and a sincere Liberal. But Asquith *cum* Margot is a lost soul.'

This was not all Margot's doing. Asquith wanted to be 'a lost soul'. He liked the high life and the social round that Margot provided, even if it sometimes exhausted him. He lived lavishly and assumed the airs of a patrician. He had an income of between £5,000 and £10,000 a year at the Bar; Margot had £5,000 a year of her own. Even so Asquith lived beyond his means. He had a house in Cavendish Square with 14 servants, including a pair of footmen, and kept a stable for his wife. It was a considerable achievement to remain even a somewhat lukewarm Liberal under such conditions.

Yet undoubtedly Asquith was a sincere and even resolute Liberal all his life. Though he did not care much for the Home Rule he had inherited from Gladstone, he was a stalwart Free Trader who could rout even Joseph Chamberlain in argument. He was also determined to get to the top. Few stories are more entertaining than the Relugas Compact, by which Asquith, Grey and Haldane agreed to relegate Campbell-Bannerman to the House of Lords. At the first whiff of high office Asquith deserted his two friends and left them to fend for themselves. Thereafter his rise to the premiership was certain. He had only to wait for Campbell-Bannerman to die; meanwhile he was Campbell-Bannerman's loyal supporter. In 1908 Asquith kissed hands as prime minister, appropriately at Biarritz. He had become 'the indispensable man'.

Morley complained, in his feline way, that Asquith as prime minister, 'although he discussed every proposition advanced by others with great intelligence and force . . . never submitted any ideas of his own for consideration'. This was always Asquith's way. He let the storm of argument rage in cabinet or in parliament and when it had blown itself out, sailed placidly forward in calm waters. He had many great achievements to show. He introduced old age pensions, one of the first steps towards the welfare state. He secured the building of a great navy despite the reluctance or outright opposition of a good many of his followers.

He enabled Grey to conduct a foreign policy which many admire and which at any rate landed England in the first world war. He reduced decisively the powers of the House of Lords. This was a long and bitter struggle which Asquith fought impeccably. It can even be argued that he had brought the Irish problem to the verge of an agreed solution when success was snatched away from him by the outbreak of war in August 1914. If he had died then or left office, he would have had an undisputed claim to rank as one of the greatest Prime Ministers in our history.

The first world war was Asquith's undoing. 'Wait and See' had proved the key to success in peace time. It was no way to run a war, particularly when the war went on so long. Asquith had really nothing to offer except his own unshakable retention of office. Moreover just when he should have become more resolute and determined, he became more pleasure-loving and easy-going than ever. Lloyd George called him rightly 'a soft-nosed torpedo'. Koss quotes Lytton Strachey's description of Asquith at Garsington in 1916:

> I studied the Old Man with extreme vigour; and really he's a corker. He seemed much larger than he did when I last saw him (just two years ago) – a fleshy, sanguine, wine-bibbing mediaeval Abbot of a personage – a gluttonous, lecherous, cynical old fellow . . . On the whole, one wants to stick a dagger in his ribs . . . and then, as well, one can't help liking him – I suppose because he *does* enjoy himself so much.

The surprise is not that Asquith fell from power but that he held on so long. Even a dead oak takes a lot of chopping down. At his fall he showed an arrogant and mistaken pride. Unlike Neville Chamberlain in 1940, he refused to serve under his successor. As Koss says, 'Asquith was acting out of pique, which he asked contemporaries to accept as principle.' Not only contemporaries have done so. After the war he lingered on as leader of the declining Liberal party with Lloyd George as his unwilling and unwelcome second. He made no attempt to arrest the decline and, though Lloyd George made many, he was equally unsuccessful. Both men had outlived their time.

Asquith accepted this fate without demur. He never repined. Perhaps he did not even realize what had happened to him. It was reported that, reading a novel by his younger daughter Elizabeth Bibesco at the Reform Club, he sighed: 'another nail in the Asquith coffin.' Frank Swinnerton asked Vivian Phillipps, Asquith's secretary, whether the story were true. Phillipps laughed and replied, 'Mr A doesn't even know there is an Asquith coffin.' Asquith was a little distressed when he was not elected Chancellor of Oxford University. He was not at all distressed at being the leader of an almost non-existent party. As long as he could conduct amorous correspondence with his lady friends, Asquith was content. He remained complacent to the end. This had always been his great fault and also his great virtue.

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Hilary Spurling

World Away

Mervyn Peake by JOHN WATNEY *Michael Joseph* £6.50
Treasure Island by ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON illustrated by Mervyn Peake *Methuen* £3.95

Mervyn Peake's life is like one of those sombre legends of mortality, the tragedy of Orpheus and Eurydice, or the ancient Chinese tale of the woodcutter who climbed a mountain, found two boys playing chess and saw, when the game was over, that his axe handle had rotted and he himself had aged a hundred years. But Peake's death is too recent for time to have begun to soften the cruel outlines of his story: its terrifying end still looms over the achievements of his middle period, and casts a shadow even over his rich and strange beginnings.

Peake was born in 1911 in China, the child of noncomformist missionary parents. His father was the only European doctor in the beautiful mountainous region of Kuling, where tiger lilies and golden fruit the size of human heads ran riot in the garden. Soon after Mervyn's birth Dr Peake travelled to what seems to have been a massacre in the revolutionary upheavals at Hankow; as a boy his son must often have heard stories of dead and dying bodies still crouched upright in their sampans on a river that ran blood, or of the head of a decapitated looter seen swinging by its pigtail from a telegraph pole. When Mervyn was a few months old the family moved north to Tientsin, a city whose fantastic carvings, walled compounds, ceremonial processions, extreme contrasts of poverty and wealth all left their mark long afterwards on Peake's three Titus Groan novels.

One would have liked to know a great deal more about this Chinese childhood; but John Watney's biography adds little to the store of family anecdote already familiar from writings by and about Peake, above all from the brilliant memoir *A World Away* by Peake's wife Maeve Gilmore. One exploit which is new describes how Mervyn, hiding in the hospital rafters to watch his father perform an amputation, fainted and fell onto the operation table far below: one thinks of Jim Hawkins clinging dizzily to the wooden spar of the *Hispaniola* in Peake's *Treasure Island* illustration, or of the many hidden watchers perched over sheer drops and sickening falls in his own novels. Peake both drew and wrote as soon as he could hold a pencil. Tientsin Grammar School seems to have taught him only to prize the pungency of life outside it: 'It had nothing to do with China. It might have been flown over in a piece from Croydon,' he wrote. 'It faced the dusty street. Its windows were mouths that shouted, "I know I'm ugly, and I like it".' Sandstorms from the Gobi Desert and strings of camels arriving from Mongolia were as familiar to Peake in childhood as Croydon must have seemed almost inconceivably remote.

At 11 he exchanged the one world for the other, travelling via the Trans-Siberian railway to settle in Surrey and go to boarding school in Kent. From now on Peake was obliged to create from his own resources an absorbing, often alarming, freakishly lit and coloured realm into which, as his technical and imaginative range increased, he gradually drew substantial portions of the real world after him. But long before he reached that point he lived by a weird compelling logic of his own. His wife has described how one day in his studio at Battersea the floorboards heaved as though an elephant were trampling underneath: it was an elephant, from a travelling circus putting up for the night in the warehouse downstairs. All his life Peake had this knack of smuggling figments from his imagination back into the drabbest or most dire surroundings. In 1939 war was declared to him in Chipping Camden by a town crier with tricorne and handbell. His first job was fitting gas masks: 'he would gently ease the elastic bands behind the head, wipe the goggling eye-pieces, adjust the black, pig-like snouts . . .'

Meanwhile his career prospered by fits and starts. His drawings and paintings were nearly always enthusiastically received. Two sons were born, and his family life was radiantly happy. The war served at once to stimulate and discipline his chaotic, prodigal imagination: the drawings commissioned for a book of nursery rhymes led eventually to his incomparable achievements in this line – the illustrations to *Treasure Island*, *The Ancient Mariner* and *Alice* – while in his spare time as a sapper he started writing *Titus Groan*. The manuscript was finished in 18 months and, if it is fascinating to read for the first time Eyre & Spottiswoode's reaction (tart words from Graham Greene, which led Peake to re-cast what seems to have been in its original incarnation a somewhat ungainly masterpiece), one cannot but feel that few writers have been so happy in a publisher who wrote, on first looking into *Gormenghast* in 1949, 'Of the energy and excitement with which we shall publish you need have no doubt whatever.'

But in his wife's view it was the war, and what Peake saw afterwards as a war artist at Belsen, that first began the change in him. In 1951 his hand started to shake a little, and he seemed to need more sleep. Six years later the comparatively modest failure of his play, *The Wit to Woo*, precipitated a collapse which was diagnosed at first as a nervous breakdown, later as premature senility. From the hospital where he was subjected to electric shock treatment, he wrote (in a letter not quoted by John Watney):

> I am afraid of something subtle. It is the smell of the place – its miles and miles of corridors . . . I will never write about mad people again . . . Never! Never again! It has done something to me. I have played too much around the edge of madness – oh I could cry to be free.

Peake's illness was Parkinson's disease contracted, according to Watney, in Tientsin during the epidemic of sleeping sickness that swept the world in 1916-17. Other cases of people who carried this living death within them for half a lifetime before it closed over their heads are described in Oliver Sacks's grim and haunting book *Awakenings*:

> One can only say that most of the survivors went down and down, through circle after circle of deepening illness, hopelessness and unimaginable solitude, their solitude, perhaps the least bearable of all.

Accounts of Peake's attempts to struggle against the early stages of his sickness are almost intolerable to read. Towards the end he failed even to recognise his wife. For 12 years she saw and touched and spoke to someone who wasn't there. A snapshot on his 56th birthday shows her taking tea in a flowery garden with an aged man, gaunt, emaciated, insubstantial as a ghost. In 1968 Peake died. From drawings made while he could still wield a pencil, from his fragmentary messages and his rare agonising awakenings to a world which slipped his grasp, it seems clear that he had long since descended to that desolate region on which Dr Sacks quotes Donne: 'As *Sicknes* is the greatest misery, so the greatest misery of sicknes, is *solitude* . . . *Solitude* is a torment which is not threatened even in *hell* itselfe.'

John Watney's chosen role in all this is not unlike that of the attendant who plods behind in Chinese scroll paintings, a patient figure waiting with a warm wrap over his arm while his master gazes in a rapture at waterfalls or cherry blossom. In a biographer this attitude makes for dullness. Mr Watney is prosaic, bland, incurious; his assessment of Peake's work is largely confined to old newspaper clippings; and he has a positive flair for translating even the most quintessential Peake story back into the banality from which it sprang. This is, in short, a biography strictly for Peake addicts, people to whom a sober chronological survey may well be useful. For anyone not yet acquainted with Peake's work the book to buy is Methuen's handsome new edition of his illustrated *Treasure Island*, a work of genius on two counts, and one no library should be without.

Eric Korn

Après Qarluq . . .

Mankind and Mother Earth: A Narrative History of the World by ARNOLD TOYNBEE *Oxford* £10.50

In H. G. Wells's *The Shape of Things to Come*, a Geneva diplomat dream-reads a history textbook published in 2106. The future intrigues him most, naturally, but

> There's a lot about the past. With all sorts of things I didn't know and all sorts of gaps filled in. Extraordinary things about North India and Central Asia . . .

The phrase kept recurring to me as I toted this world history about a considerable mileage of what Toynbee would call the Anglo-American 'Oikoumenê', my attention frequently beguiled by in-flight movies or the legends on sugar packets (a Bicenten-

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nial series of Presidents: nobody sweetens with Nixon).

Toynbee's life of travel and geo-historical thought made almost instinctive what to most of us comes very hard; the grand satellite-view of cultures and empires, constrained by portages, confluences and other geographical channels, wheeling and swirling about the great roundabouts of Northern Syria and the Upper Oxus. From there he could descry astonishing parallels: Philip of Macedon and Shang Yang, Caesar and Shih Hwang-ti, Narmer and Lugalzaggisi.

What seem, from ground level, inexplicable eruptions become part of long mountain-building processes – 'the 100-year-long Roman revolution', 'eight centuries of Hellenism'. It is an antidote to the view of history as increasing giddily in pace and interest as it nears the present, and one that induces both gloom and resignation: 'there are about 170 local sovereign states in the present-day global Oikoumenê; its political configuration is the same as that of Sumer in the third millennium BC.' Two chapters in particular are astonishing in their easy manipulation of whole libraries of learning: one is a conspectus of the Roman, Parthian, Kushan, and Chinese empires, the other a synoptic view of the five near-contemporaries Buddha, Zarathustra, Confucius, Pythagoras and 'Deutero-Isaiah'. Significantly, I found him most interesting on Deutero-Isaiah, for he succeeds in putting Jewish history, neither reverently magnified nor sceptically diminished, into its Syrian context; least interesting about Pythagoras, for he neglects the content of speculation, physical or metaphysical, that does not lead to a spiritualised, universalist monotheism. But Atomism has meant at least as much as Atonism in the evolution of a global consciousness.

The novel insights of Toynbee's overview, and the numerous aphorisms ('archaism is a symptom of diffidence', 'institutionalisation is the price of durability'), are often nearly occluded by a too-minute chronicle of empires and creeds slugging it out indefatigably. What's the good of getting rid of Napoleon and Bannockburn, only to chart, in equally onerous detail, Psammetichus or the annexation of Nan Chao in 1253? States pullulate like an overstimulated tissue-culture: it is the processes of growth that should concern us, not a catalogue of the boundary changes, engulfings and encystments, and the continual waves of nomadic bacterial invasions ('The Qarluqs were soon followed by the Ghuzz who were being driven westward by the Qipchaqs'). My sedulously attentive gaze at times wandered, till a pedagogic knuckle-rap woke me: 'It might have been expected that the native revolt by which the Gutaeans were exterminated . . . would have been led by the Gutaeans Akkadian victims'; 'we may guess that they [the Tokharistanis] would have reverted from Zoroastrianism the Buddhism in order to play a leading part in the rehabilitation of the Chinese T'ang dynasty's finances after China's catastrophe in 755-763.' Just what I was going to say myself.

Throughout, kingdoms and creeds are unfashionably judged to be 'a good thing' or 'a bad thing' in the manner of Sellars and Yeatman – *Tao Te Ching and All That*, perhaps. Few rulers get any marks at all, except for Akhenaton, Ashoka and Akbar. Jainism rates high, but Islam is hammered:

> Thus robbery, war and massacre were among the means by which Muhammad won his victory for Islam. The same crimes have been committed by Christians and, less frequently, also by Buddhists, and in the Jewish scriptures they are attributed to Moses and Joshua. But at least the founders of Buddhism and Christianity did not set their followers these bad examples.

Political theory is scarcely mentioned: there is a blimpish reference to the power of the Trade Unions and Marxism is noticed briefly as the fourth Judaic religion.

What then is the target of this work, too particular for a general thesis, too remote from primary sources for a work of reference? (The only chronology admitted to be debatable is that of Peru: we are told repeatedly that the stratigraphical and Carbon-14 dates of the 'Florescent' phase differ, but the controversy over Minoan dating is ignored.) If the title promises a history based on ecology, this is not fulfilled, except in the opening and closing sections with their grim but familiar warnings of man's capacity to destroy the biosphere, and perhaps also in the weird judgment that Hagia Sophia is more beautiful than the Parthenon because curves are more natural than straight lines.

Mankind and Mother Earth is perhaps best seen in the tradition of Wells's *Outline of History*, a book to which I turned, to be amazed anew by its seductive readability and dazzling overconfidence. Where Wells is perfunctory, Toynbee is professional; where Wells is programmatic, Toynbee is admonitory; Wells looks for a world state and Toynbee for a world-soul. For him,

> the enigma lies in the mysterious fact that Man, alone among the inhabitants of the biosphere, is also an inhabitant of another realm as well – a spiritual realm that is nonmaterial and invisible.

The gulf between these two realms, described in such question-begging terms, he crosses on the insecure bridge erected by that dubious engineer, Teilhard de Chardin, for whom 'biosphere' is by some sleight of hand converted from a container of life to a living organism. Hence Toynbee's rather facile deprecation of evolutionism.

He follows Teilhard in his attempt to reinvest history with a guiding principle by juggling with the notion of directed mutation: but he is infinitely more endearing and admirable. The aims, faults and virtues of this, his last testament, are revealed in a strange and enchanting passage;

> Urbanism, as well as affluence, alienates Man from Mother Earth. Both these maladies were beginning to afflict Western Christendom in St Francis's day. Posterity is indebted to St Francis, not only for his deliberate espousal of poverty, but also for his innate fellow feeling for all living creatures. The reality of the relation of mutual confidence between St Francis and wild birds and animals can be inferred from the famous legends, even if the legends themselves are not authentic records of historical facts. This mutual confidence has been rare in the old-world Oikumenê in any region to the west of India. St Francis's own canticle stopped short originally at the Shinto-like praise of God for Mother Earth and the Vegetable Kingdom. The stanza praising him for the Sun might have been written by Akhenaton; the stanza praising him for the elements might be Zoroastrian. From the lips of a Judaic monotheist, these praises are precious.

Larzer Ziff

Keep It Up

Lindbergh: A Biography by LEONARD MOSLEY *Hodder & Stoughton* £6.50

Charles A. Lindbergh died two years ago this month. Accounts aplenty already exist of the three-act drama of his life: his solo flight from New York to Paris; his child's kidnapping and murder; his admiration for a good deal of what he saw in Nazi Germany and his political attempts to keep the United States out of the war. Although Leonard Mosley makes some reference to papers not yet accessible to the public and to certain acquaintances of the Lindberghs not previously quoted, his book, as a whole, is a synthesis of familiar details set forth in a very familiar style – that of the diligent journalist whose prose occasionally lapses into journalese as an unwitnessed scene is dramatised.

This biography does not concern itself to any degree with the psychological or cultural questions posed by Lindbergh's career, and the decision not to engage them is a prudent one: Mr Mosley's talent for such speculation does not appear to be strong, but he clearly possesses the stamina of the sound researcher. Some matters, however, cry so insistently for analysis that, from time to time, we are supplied with commentaries from the lips of those who knew Lindbergh. Taken together these commentaries do not add up to a unified insight into character, but each is compelling in itself.

With regard to Lindbergh's attitude toward the Nazis, for example, Harold Nicolson speaks of the aftermath of the kidnap trial:

> He identified the outrage to his private life with the popular press, and by inevitable association with the freedom of speech, and then with freedom. He began to loathe democracy.

And as an explanation of the epilogue to the drama – Lindbergh's efforts on behalf of conservation in his last years, when he came to prefer birds to planes – Tom Harrisson is quoted, not necessarily about Lindbergh in particular, although the context is suggestive:

> You often find racialists among conservationists. They rationalise their dislike of the ordinary run of the human race by having this strong love of animals, or primitive tribes.

Lindbergh was the only child of a United States Congressman and his second wife, a school teacher who remained at her job

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for many years after she could have retired on her famous son's generosity. In his boyhood Lindbergh witnessed the estrangement of his parents and he grew up without friends, constructing his own world in a fashion that touches a number of America's mythological heroes: floating along the Mississippi like Huck Finn on a raft he built himself; jotting down the virtues that would lead to self-perfection and periodically comparing his performance against the list, like Benjamin Franklin. The great fictional hero of the decade in which he became the real hero was Jay Gatz, himself a floater on boats and a keeper of a Franklin log against the day of his magical transformation into Gatsby.

But Lindbergh's transformation came not from boarding a millionaire's yacht but from his determined conversion of solitude into concentration. He literally slept with his plane, and his mastery of the techniques of flying was matched by his mastery of the principles of aerodynamics and the mechanics of the internal combustion engine. His large and calm courage grew straight from his unreflecting, pragmatic self-reliance.

The likeness of Lindbergh to the Western loner who achieves greatness in a crisis and thereby represents the potential of his democratic fellows (call me Slim) is superficial when considered in the context of the extreme, even anti-social, isolation of his young manhood and his commitment to the flying machine. Rather, he more closely resembles the possessed artist who fuses himself with his creation, forming a world apart from the world, one which operates down upon reality symbolically, not up from it representatively. During the glorious 33½ hours of flight in 1927 Lindbergh and *The Spirit of St Louis* were continuous; a man had neither used a machine nor been used by it but had formed a union with it. The spirit of all men was lifted.

It is notorious that Lindbergh failed to lift the spirit of his fellows in his subsequent terrestrial activities. As we near the 50th anniversary of his famous flight, however, its ugly aftermath fades, while the achievement still stands large. He was not only the century's first great international hero but perhaps the last hero who refused to yield to the century's desire to consume the celebrated as it consumes bathing suits and packaged foods. He would not exchange his sense of self for that self's public image, and the glory as well as the shame of the 'America First' period was that Lindbergh was being true to himself rather than to what most of his admirers and friends – even his in-laws – had projected for him.

As one reads this biography, compelled by authorial silence to frame an interpretation from the abundant facts, the heroic American type that finally presents itself for comparison is neither that of the benevolent scepticism of Huck Finn-Ben Franklin nor that of the many lone hands portrayed by Gary Cooper. It is, rather, that of Edgar Allan Poe, the deracinated artist as technician, so much in his symbolic world that he is ignorant of fellow feeling and and intolerant of human imperfection. He must be judged by the world he did create rather than the one he too often abused.

Jeremy Treglown

Brief Lives

Season in Purgatory by THOMAS KENEALLY *Collins* £3.75
100 Scenes from Married Life by GILES GORDON *Hutchinson* £3.95
Full Up by MOLLY PARKIN *Michael Joseph* £3.95
The Yellow Meads of Asphodel by H. E. BATES *Michael Joseph* £3.50

One of the good things about Thomas Keneally, of whom more later, is that he writes about death, sex and birth as if he didn't know anyone had noticed them before. It's not so much that he avoids clichés or overstatement as that he seems unworried by the fact that they are possible, achieving a Tolstoyan appearance of naturalness which comes from his unostentatious concern for the people in his story rather than for the artistic or emotional personality he himself would like to present. The alternatives aren't always obvious if most of the novels one reads are good ones, but a steady look at *100 Scenes from Married Life* throws them into eye-watering relief. Giles Gordon tries to get away with the boringness of his style by actually drawing attention to it the whole time. There's the not-my-fault gambit: 'She leant forward towards me, brushed my lips with hers and, as the phrase has it, was gone'; or the what-else-can-I-say series of dots: 'It's . . . nice to be home'; or the ponderous literalism: 'They froze, metaphorically speaking, when the bell rang.' With its endless allusions to Glenlivet and Mozart, its meretricious use of anti-novel techniques, its unclever circumlocutions ('She, doubly disinterested reader if you are also a she, wanted not again the rude eruption') it's the most pretentious book I've ever read. But perhaps all this is a ghastly trick intended to direct the reader's response to Edward's marriage whose fabric, he admits in a spell of first-person narrative, 'seemed to be held together by an accumulation of clichés'.

The failure of *100 Scenes* is a pity because its subject is worth writing about well. The most happy, even-keeled marriage, Giles Gordon seems to be trying to show, is still full of loneliness, gloom and frustration for each partner.

Molly Parkin's narrator displays her parts in a thoroughly 18th-century fictional manner, ringing the predictable crescendo of changes on the sex-life of a picaresque restaurateur, from the Plain Bob with Lionel Striving, through the odd Hunt Backward with Brad, to two full sets of Grandsire Doubles with her Old Man, supported at first by a battery-run dildo, later by a dyke in drag in a Paris church. Drear stuff, then, even though the Welshness of Auntie produces a few jokes to keep the otherwise limping narrative on the move. 'Dai,' shrieks the woman in Bowen's Dairy, 'there's a person here whose auntie's mother's brother was a gardener in the Blind School in Bridgend!'

Plenty of that kind of ear for regionalese in the work of H. E. Bates, of course, which is why – together with his natty line in plots – he televises so well. Not enough of it among the tremulous fussiness of *The Yellow Meads of Asphodel*, though, a posthumous batch of short stories in which he's almost always at a loss for an ending, either zooming in on the bottle of sleeping pills and the farewell note or panning out into a spaciously troubled sky: 'and all the beauty of the day was gone', etc. Most of the yarns hinge on middle-aged insomnia, gardening and hard swilling of elderberry wine, as you'd expect, but there's not enough of the descriptive edge which tends to save his earlier short stories from sentimentality – the rejected husband/father in 'Fuchsia', for example, with his 'awkward hands rather like dead crabs'. All the same, 'Loss of Pride' in this collection successfully and very economically mixes rustic sadism with an unexpectedly Sterne-like comic climax when randy old Pouchy gets his come-uppance from the lads at the pub, who shove a hot potato down his trousers. It's a hilariously surprising moment, unobtrusively prepared for by repeated references to the agonising heat of the potatoes Uncle Silas eats as he undertells his story ('Sting a tidy bit when they're hot, boy'), and Bates ends it with a bleak eye for the actual nastiness of what happens: 'in the end he wur half a cripple. . . . Lost his pride. Onaccountable bad. Pass us the butter.'

It's a similar amused but tough alertness to other people's lives, only more so, that characterises Thomas Keneally's exciting and moving fiction about a young British surgeon working for Tito's partisans on an island near the coast of German-occupied Yugoslavia. Too well-integrated to yield up easy quotations, *Season in Purgatory* displays its author's conscience through its own materials rather than by stylistic trickiness or external philosophising. David Pelham operates on soldiers who then go out to kill other soldiers, or to be killed. One day he delivers a baby whose tubercular mother he knows will soon die; later he kills in the womb a foetus whose mother would herself be murdered by her fellow partisans if her pregnancy were discovered. It is an infinitely more life-like and death-like world than any presented to us by Mr Gordon, and one which, though narrower in immediate focus than Mr Keneally's recent and much-praised *Gossip from the Forest*, nonetheless shakes with the moral and political implications of its well-imagined historical circumstances.

Among this week's contributors:

Among LARZER ZIFF's publications are *The Career of John Cotton* (1962) and *Puritanism in America* (1973).

NORMAN PLATT is the Artistic Director of Kent Opera.

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The Performing Arts – Opera

Norman Platt

Albert's Memorials

Drains, art-galleries, theatres, swimming-baths and opera companies are all, it can reasonably be argued, essential amenities of a civilised community. The fact that opera companies have long been given a high priority in other countries, notably Germany, but until recently no priority at all in England, is nothing to do with any real or supposed British philistinism but simply an historical accident. (England might have had state-subsidised opera more than 100 years ago if the Prince Consort, who was urging its introduction, had not died prematurely.) By the time we did get round to the idea of subsidising opera, the artistic life of the country was even more firmly centralised in London than formerly; it was inevitable that opera outside London should remain, in the immediate postwar years, a very hand-to-mouth business.

For some time, before it was absorbed by Sadler's Wells, the Carl Rosa Company continued to carry the torch of touring opera. Other touring companies such as Basilica and later Phoenix emerged. Enterprising small groups like the Opera Players and the Arts Council Opera for All companies took (and still take) abbreviated operas with piano accompaniment to halls of all shapes and sizes throughout the country. Gallant, sometimes desperate local efforts were made. Occasionally Covent Garden lifted its great weight and plonked it down for a short provincial season. And the Glyndebourne Festival, having already provided during the Thirties privately-subsidised operatic revelations for a dazzled minority, resumed its activities. There was also the English Opera Group, one of the most imaginative and artistically successful ventures to appear on the British musical scene. But the main part of the operatic diet of the provinces was provided by Sadler's Wells (later English National Opera) tours, more recently supplemented by welcome invasions from the Scottish and Welsh national companies.

In the past five years these three major companies plus Glyndebourne Touring Opera have presented annually roughly 200 performances in England outside London. And the regions cry: it is not enough. How right they are: a ratio of approximately 300 performances in London to about 200 in the rest of the country per year. The regions are understandably resentful; they claim that the national companies such as the RSC, the National Theatre, ENO and the Royal Ballet belong to them just as much as they belong to London, and therefore all regions should share them equally with London. The most perfunctory study of the number of days in the year, the number of regions, the spread of their populations and the facilities available will show that this is a physical impossibility.

But even if it were possible, is it desirable? Are the regions really best served by this old-fashioned sort of metropolitan patronage? Over the past 15 years or so there has been a move towards decentralisation of the arts in the shape of Regional Arts Associations, but so far there has been no comparable move towards decentralisation of opera except in the South East, which was the last area to have its own Arts Association, but the first to have its own opera company. A logical development of the Regional Arts Association concept would be for all of them to have their own opera companies: this would achieve something like an adequate coverage – quite unattainable by the large-scale touring method. However, the creation at a stroke of ten new opera companies, even small ones with limited seasons, is likely to be more than the Treasury's nerves could bear. The readjustment in the country's artistic resources would also need careful long-term planning: there have never been so many excellent British singers as there are at present but,

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even so, such a sudden influx of demand would spread them very thin.

So what are the immediate possibilities? At present Kent Opera has a sort of brief to cover the South of England, with occasional excursions beyond. In the long term this is probably too wide an area for a single company to cover, but is a reasonable arrangement in present conditions. There is promise of a new company based on Leeds; the suggestion is that it would be an offspring of ENO, so we must hope that for the health of both it will not cling too tightly to its mother's apron-strings. The English Music Theatre, that exciting development from the lamented English Opera Group, roams the country at large and the Glyndebourne Touring Company performs a valuable service with its five-week post-Festival tours.

What is necessary and practical in the immediate future is the formation of at least three extra regional companies in addition to Kent Opera and the new Leeds company. One of these new companies would cover the North West, one the North Midlands and the third the South Midlands; and it might be possible to widen the repertory by judicious exchange of particularly interesting productions between the companies. It is not simply a matter of providing coverage. There is no reason whatsoever why regional companies should not produce work on as high an artistic level as can be obtained anywhere, provided certain priorities are observed.

A first-class orchestra is as vital to an opera company as are first-class singers; and no attention should be paid to the condescending idea, which still persists in some quarters, that the function of regional companies is to give experience to young singers before they move on to the metropolitan/jet world. The regions deserve the same quality as the metropolis, and must choose their performers simply according to artistic need.

A stagione rather than a repertory system is essential – i.e., a limited number of performances of a limited number of works in a limited season, rather than a large pool of works which is drawn on, under-rehearsed, for a long period. The repertory system with constantly changing casts makes nonsense of a production. Singing should be in English. The damage that translation does to the original is depressing, but not nearly so depressing as the sight of an audience sitting in resentful (or complacent) ignorance of what is happening.

The keystone of a regional opera company is that the roots of its support should be local, while its standards of performance must be measured in national and international terms. The value of local support cannot be overstated. For new companies the purely financial aspect of this support may not always be so vital as it was in Kent, where the company started with no capital at all and was kept going by its members, who cared that it should exist and who now care equally that it should survive and develop; for the first few years the money received from these sources exceeded the grants it got from central funds (the Arts Council at that time was somewhat sceptical about the whole idea of regional companies; it has seen the light since). But local support is important in some other ways.

The principal justification of a regional opera company is that it can make its goods available to people who would otherwise have no opportunity to enjoy them, or even to find out if they wanted them. The sense of identification with a company which has its roots among them is more likely to induce the operatically-deprived to try the taste than if the company is briefly bestowed on them by distant mandarins and then whisked away again. This was formerly a guess: now it has been proved true. The companies are there to serve a social need, which cannot be accurately identified and served from a long distance.

Opera does not have to be so expensive as it is sometimes made to be; but it is by its nature the most expensive art form yet devised. If art is necessary at all, however, the stage works of Monteverdi, Mozart, Verdi and those present-day composers who try to tread in their rather demanding footsteps, are as necessary as the works of Shakespeare, Ibsen, Chekhov and their followers. If these works are needed, they are needed by everybody, not just a privileged few: which is why we need regional opera companies.

Orchestras

Edward Greenfield

City Sound

As a musical martinet, the late George Szell had a simple answer to London's orchestral problems: the four independent orchestras should forthwith be reduced to two. Edward Heath has more recently added fuel to that idea, when on television he complained, reasonably enough, that London had no orchestra to compare with the Berlin Philharmonic. The view has been openly canvassed by administrators. It is not so long since the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, in the backlash period after Beecham's death, was squeezed to the point of near-extinction, until the report of the Goodman Committee, set up by Harold Wilson soon after coming to power, ensured that any major London orchestra would disappear only by design.

But go to any other major music centre in the world, and you will immediately miss the multiplicity of programmes provided at the Festival Hall. There are incidental snags when each orchestra is chasing an audience instead of relying on regular subscribers who take what is given to them, but if you are in Vienna with the Philharmonic giving only ten different programmes in its season or in New York with each programme repeated five times, it is a far cry from London where we expect a different programme every night of the week and two on Sundays.

The challenge has obviously gone too far when – as Eric Bravington, Managing Director of the London Philharmonic, said when introducing the orchestra's annual report – an orchestral player has to undertake three long sessions in a single day or goes for a whole month without a rest day. But compared with his colleagues in international orchestras abroad, the London orchestral musician is appallingly underpaid. Balance that against the ingrained attitude of the London player who is never so happy as when he is challenged to difficult sight-

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Sibelius, The Swan of Tuonela
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Bartok, Concert for Orchestra
Walton, Belshazzar's Feast
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Brighton Festival Chorus

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Soloist: BERNARD PARTRIDGE
Overture: PROUD THAMES Maconchy
VIOLIN CONCERTO Elgar
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Greater London Council
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Director George Mann, OBE
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reading. This is one powerful reason why the London orchestras are so useful to the record companies with tight schedules for unknown works.

It is above all the recording scene which provides an abundant supply of work for our many orchestras. It ensures the existence of an orchestra not on any recognised list but arguably the finest in London, the National Philharmonic. Going to a recording session with that band can be quite an eye-opener, for there in echelon one behind the other will be up to half a dozen of the country's top orchestral leaders.

This underlines the oddity of the London system. The members of the four independent orchestras are all self-employed, owing their first loyalty to their main orchestra but always able to opt out for other engagements. It is this system which acts – with the top players at least – as an encouragement to individuality. George Szell saw it as the main stumbling block to any major change. The central recommendation of the Arts Council report of 1970 – that two orchestras should be salaried to take on the concert work with two others of freelancers doing the recording and film work – has significantly remained a dead letter.

But what of standards? In the international league are our orchestras merely poor relations? My own feeling is that the very competition within London music-making helps to ensure that the four independent orchestras remain internationally competitive. It may be unfair to think of an orchestral league-table, but the ding-dong challenges between the brilliant London Symphony Orchestra on the one hand and the gentler, seductive London Philharmonic have over the last few years worked towards higher standards in both bands.

As the obvious front-runner of the Sixties, the LSO was in the less happy role of fighting off a challenge, and has over the last few years had more than its share of organisational worries. Certainly the effect of crises is unsettling on players, but one vital point to recognise is how little the actual composition of the LSO has changed over the last ten years. One member of the first violin section told me recently that though he has been in the orchestra for over ten years, he is still second junior among the ranking first violins, and his colleagues are hardly grey-haired. That is the sort of consistency that gets an orchestra through crises of whatever magnitude, and the signs are good for the future. Michael Kaye, for long associated with the LSO through his previous job with the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation, has now taken over as general manager, and the abrasive John Georgiadis is returning as leader. John Brown, a persuasive leader, is now going to the Covent Garden Orchestra.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra represents a total contrast, an orchestra that has made consistent and steady progress over 20 years, thanks above all to the shrewd and dedicated management of a former player, now managing director, Eric Bravington. It is partly at least because the organisation throws up fewer narks and grouses among the players that the LPO immediately seems a more docile band than the LSO. Not that LPO performances lack anything in bite, but the temperament of the principal conductor, Bernard Haitink, matches that of the orchestra – a superb orchestral trainer, a man of real dedication. There is little doubt that for beauty, as opposed to brilliance of tone, the LPO wins the orchestral contest. Its leader, Rodney Friend, is now off to New York to take up the post of concert-master with the New York Philharmonic, but the choice of successor is genuinely imaginative – David Nolan, a young and likeable scowser, a superb artist, who made his way in the LPO before taking his last job as principal second violin in the LSO.

Though in the end I have to agree that none of our London Orchestras quite matches the Berlin Philharmonic or Chicago Symphony, they fall remarkably little short, and all of them are capable of giving night after night generally more committed performances than we in London have witnessed in some of the recent visits of the Berlin and Chicago players. As I see it, in London over the last ten years we have had a levelling up, not a levelling down. In particular with string-players the signs are that the need has cultivated the supply to the benefit of standards all round. If there is one central reason why London (to use what has become almost a cliché phrase) stands as world music capital, it is that we have this big, seemingly extravagant, range of orchestras. It is time that it was embraced as a great national asset, with funds provided to allow tolerable conditions for players and secure more planning.

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Jazz

Russell Davies

Clubmen

If I claim that British jazz has never been healthier, it's partly because the musicians are healthier, or at least happier with themselves. There is less deathly pallor around on the nation's bandstands, and one or two figures whom ill-health has kept away too long – the fine, authoritative tenor sax player Bobby Wellins is the latest example – are back in the form that made them famous in their sphere. It may be that the deaths of heroes like Phil Seamen and Tubby Hayes have taken the romance out of self-neglect; or possibly the relaxation of the class-war between jazz styles has just made playing careers less of a day-to-day strain. But for one reason or another, there are now more pillars than doormats of the community among jazz musicians. Perhaps the most striking symbol of this upturn in social compatibility is Art Themen, whom I could describe as the most widely recommendable, likely-to-please soloist among the advanced, linear modernist improvisers. As well as being the master of a thrillingly allusive and athletic style on both tenor and soprano saxophones, the very genial Themen is also a surgeon at 'a busy London Hospital'; the jazzman as paragon. Jelly Roll Morton, pianist, pimp and pool-shark, would have stood amazed.

But then jazz has been with us in Britain long enough to have taken on the shape of a national institution – of the nation itself, in fact. The jazz hierarchy that exists in the public mind is a sort of dotty parody of our social order. We have a Royal Couple, Cleo Laine and her consort John, as gracious yet inscrutable as Windsors in their scrupulously maintained glamour, and a Prime Minister, Humphrey Lyttelton, whose weekly broadcasts on behalf of the Eclectic party keep the conservative past and the revolutionary future diplomatically in balance. There are few great landowners left, but at least one, the honourable Ronnie Scott, is still entertaining foreign nobs at his stately home in Frith Street. And so on through cabinet ministers, comedians, whores, academics: all of them easy to cast from among the huge range of character actors in British jazz.

Life among the commoners, I can report from my own experience, is quite bearable, and standards are high. This was never made plainer than on 4 July this year, during the coast-to-coast TV survey of the Bicentennial Day celebrations in America. Some jazz was promised, and from the centre of old New Orleans, too: an open-air concert in memory of Louis Armstrong, who used to share his birthday with the nation. But the music was *terrible*. Wittering, disjointed stuff in a variety of un-felt and non-interlocking Dixieland styles. If it had been in tune, it still wouldn't have been good enough to serve as background music in a supermarket. The band I play with in Cambridge, England, would have handed in its massed resignations if it had been caught noodling as pointlessly as this, even at closing time on a Saturday night.

For the standard of local music-making in Britain – from brass bands and Scottish country dancing to the lone flautist who serenades the sun in Old Compton Street – is very high, and it promises to be higher now that so many schools are encouraging active music-making. We must all expect to be blown off the stage in ten years' time by little squirts for whom Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington are figures about as real and contemporary as Dame Clara Butt would have been to a teddy-boy.

Good luck to them, of course. It will be strange for them, acquiring their jazz proficiency in an atmosphere no longer vibrating to the distinctive tones of the great originals whose work caused and embodied the development of the music. I shall always be glad I came of pubbable and clubbable age just in time for that brief but ecstatic *belle époque* of the mid-Sixties when there was a sudden flow of trans-atlantic traffic, and artists like Ben Webster, Henry 'Red' Allen, Pee Wee Russell, Earl Hines, Wild Bill Davison and Bud Freeman were suddenly available at your local jazz cellar. These men had styles that were once the very best and most modern of their day. They created the historical necessities that formed the styles of others; to listen to them was to be educated into a tradition by its founders. This privilege is not to be enjoyed very much longer. Soon enough, forming a jazz style will not be a matter of feeling impelled by musical history, but of choosing from an available range of possibilities. Something is bound to be lost in the way of conviction and idiosyncrasy.

Much will be gained, though, and has been gained already, in the way of relaxation. Never have traditionalists and modernists got on so well as they currently do. It has been said, doubtless with unkind intent, that they are united in their distrust of the avant-garde, whom they see as sacrificing the cherished propulsive and audience-involving aspects of jazz to the future possibility of an alliance with experimenters in the fields of concert or 'conservatory' music. But this is already a considerable advance towards rational argument, if you consider that 20 years ago, the trading of epithets – 'mouldy fig', 'longhair' – was the nearest approach to dialogue.

But what one can afford to feel most Pollyanna-ish about is the new status conferred on jazz by its international character. As I write, 'my' band is leaving for Germany to represent Bishop's Stortford in a town-twinning exercise. Three months ago, we played, at vast cost to ourselves but some gain to the Friuli earthquake fund, in the Piazza Signoria in Florence, whither we had travelled, not inappropriately, by ambulance. Back in England, one of our first gigs was the Great Meat Ball in Smithfield Market. The stones of the Renaissance; a million meat-hooks: all backgrounds now come alike to jazz, and no wonder. A music which its practitioners so much enjoy giving out – and in which so much of the personality is invested once the impromptu spirit has taken hold – cannot fail to engage all manner of audiences in the end.

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Ballet

Oleg Kerensky

Integration

The usual uncertainties about the future of ballet are augmented just now by the general uncertainty about the future. A few years ago it was commonplace to look forward to the creation of ballet companies throughout the regions; now, though, nobody can be sure how far the existing companies will be able to maintain standards or even survive. But if we can assume that our economy will recover, it should be equally safe to assume that support for the arts will continue and that the expansion of ballet will be secure.

At present by far the biggest regular audience for ballet is still in London; companies on tour have an uphill task to fill the theatres, except when they dance the most familiar classics. In London, on the other hand, the Royal Ballet's touring section now regularly packs Sadler's Wells, with short modern works and without star names, and Dance Theatre of Harlem has just achieved the same thing. I have often been derided for saying that the most urgent need for more ballet is in London, where the demand exceeds the supply, rather than in the regions, where the reverse is the case. However unfashionable this may sound, it remains true.

The news that the Royal Ballet's touring group is to have permanent offices and studios at Sadler's Wells is a most welcome indication. The main object is to improve rehearsal and training facilities, so that standards of performance can be even higher. Announcing the news, John Tooley was at pains to stress that the company would not give extra performances at Sadler's Wells; if there were any extra performances at all, he declared, they would be in the regions. No doubt this is what the Arts Council demands. But when the company is installed at Sadler's Wells, the theatre is available, and the public demand for ballet is unsatisfied, logic will surely force the management to respond and the Arts Council to abandon its bias.

Predicting a growth in ballet audiences, companies and performances is factual and uncontroversial compared with any attempt to predict content. Of late it has been widely assumed that theatrical dance is moving into a new era of 'total theatre', 'multi-media' and 'free expression', with social relevance replacing escapism and relatively simple 'natural' barefoot techniques replacing laboriously learnt 'artificial' pointwork. It now looks as if most of this will be a dead end, just as most of the similar experiments of the Twenties were. As audiences get more experienced and sophisticated, they come to realise that dancers trying to speak are a very feeble substitute for dancers doing what they are trained to do. They discover that dancers and choreographers, however sincere, rarely have anything very interesting or original to say.

I think too that audiences will increasingly demand to be entertained, and will no longer agree to be passive onlookers while the dancers obtain therapeutic outlets. Many people have a strong compulsion to move or emote to music, and some of them now think that this is sufficient reason for performing in public, regardless of their appearance, skill or ability to communicate. The most recent example was provided by William Louther's newly formed Dance and Theatre Corporation, which seemed to be neither dance nor theatre. It opened its programme at The Place with photo projections of the dancers, from childhood to the present day, and of their parents, and with tape recordings of their biographical details and of their reasons for dancing. There is no future in this kind of narcissism.

Perhaps new life will come from new immigrants. As we become more and more of a multi-racial society, the question of black dance companies, or of integrated ones, must grow urgent. So far the Royal Ballet has set itself firmly against non-white dancers (with about one distinguished exception), as it has against white foreigners. This kind of discrimination is incompatible with our social and political ideals; on the other hand, a black Wili or Swan sticks out strangely in a classical corps de ballet. One day we may all ignore colour differences, but we are dulling our senses if we don't notice physical differences between people, and ballet is above all an art requiring heightened visual awareness.

In any case, I assume that *Giselle*, *Swan Lake* and the other classics will endure; along with such modern classics as *Romeo and Juliet* and *La Fille Mal Gardée*, they are the most popular works in the repertoire. That repertoire is now quite rich and varied enough to satisfy audiences for years ahead, even if nothing new were created at all. Abstract works like Ashton's *Symphonic Variations*, Robbins's *Dances at a Gathering* and most of Balanchine's output, and dramatic all-dance works such as Ashton's *A Month in the Country*, show promising ways ahead. If anyone objects that these ballets are all more or less escapist and irrelevant to our problems, I reply that the arts are not there to solve our problems – the problems are to be solved to enable us to enjoy the finer things of life, not least the arts.

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Benedict Nightingale

Proper Stuff

Oh, for a pair of seven-league boots and some magic spectacles. I don't know how else it is possible to get to Leith for a 5.30 performance, to Morningside for an 8.00 one and then to the Royal Mile by 10.30 prompt, how else one is supposed to discriminate between the contents of the congested brantub that is Auld Reekie this summer. Shall it be the Bradford Solo Company in *The Passion Considered as an Uphill Bicycle Race* ('for centuries we have confused the real cross with that other cross, the straight handlebar') or Lady Bracknell's Handbag in *Creatures Great and Small* ('silver collection for Animal Welfare Year')? No, a visit to either would mean missing the Golden Screw Collective, which is presenting, not only several playlets by the widely-admired Robert Patrick, but 'a very special event comprising seven months of exploration and improvisation through the experience of Death'. Little wonder that conscientious critics like yours-in-haste end up as bundles of nerves and split shoe leather – alien versions of the derelicts who, by the by, litter the Grassmarket in even greater numbers than usual, a reminder of the Scottish recession and a reproach to the skittering hedonists en route from the Lyceum to the Traverse.

I talk, of course, mainly about the Fringe, which is (as usual) the principal reason for coming to the Edinburgh Festival. The festival proper, the festival *very* proper this year, has done our discriminating for us already, though its administrators should expect no thankyou letters for their pains. When the Royal Court found it impossible to bring up David Storey's *Night*, it offered them his new comedy, which happens to involve sex on a council estate. And did Mr Diamand and his henchmen break into tiny gurgles of joy at the prospect of presenting what sounds like a striking new departure by one generally agreed to be among our half-dozen best playwrights? Did they, hell. Instead, they demonstrated once again that Edinburgh is principally a music festival, with an official attitude to drama that ranges from indolent interest to a mistrust so archaically absolute that its organisers are quite prepared to do the equivalent of ban a symphony by a major composer on the grounds that it contains too many F sharps. Beastly Storey's lewd play was rejected. And so it was that the Oxford Playhouse Company was hurriedly summoned to fill the gap with *Pal Joey*, an event of which I can say nothing except that it needed more finesse, more energy, and much more rehearsal.

Still, Mr Diamand has brought the La Mama Company over from America, which is something, and an interesting if perverse *Measure for Measure* from Birmingham rep to the Assembly Hall. Stuart Burge, who directs, takes issue both with those who see

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the Duke of Vienna as the Christian god in courtly disguise and with those, like myself, who think him hardly more than a means of unjamming an intransigent plot. From the moment Bernard Lloyd prances gleefully out of his front door, entrusting his domains to Angelo as a last-minute inspiration, akin to remembering to cancel the milk before going on holiday, it is clear that this is a thoroughly irresponsible prince, reckless of the well-being of his subjects. His object, if any, in giving his deputy so much rope is to get some fun out of watching him hang himself: which David Burke's yellowish Angelo duly does, with much heavy frowning and rancorous cawing. The main victim of his bad breath is Anna Calder-Marshall, an Isabel more remarkable for intensity of feeling than subtlety of mind. At the end she's left alone onstage to look numb, bewildered, and not the least rapturous about the prospect of marrying the Duke: hardly a surprising conclusion given Mr Lloyd's skittish narcissist, but scarcely the one Shakespeare intended. Indeed, this is less the play he wrote than a critique of that play, a well-intentioned but presumptuous scenario of the play he *should* have written.

La Mama, performing their version of Euripides's *Trojan Women* among, around and above our twisted necks, certainly offers some stunningly theatrical moments – *Andromache anointing and mourning* the doomed Astyanax, for instance, or Helen stripped, smeared, savaged by a bear, then executed. But the words that accompany such actions are 'ancient Greek, Aztec, American Indian, the language of African ritual and songs of South America and the Balkans', quite a challenge for those who never got past O-level in Latin and French. Who were those women bawling 'sag, sag, sag, sag', and why did those bare, brawny men persistently chorus what sounded like 'Mr Squeers in his bowler'? What did this glottular angst *mean*? The director, Andrei Serban, tells us that he is interested in 'sound as expressing the intensity and quality of feeling', a worthy aspiration but not one calculated to make a plot comprehensible, an idea clear or a character real. One suspects that he's evolved a form too limited, too blunt and crude to be influential, for all its passing success in incarnating large, vague emotions. Towers of Babel, though impressive in their way, have a habit of coming to no good.

Though my ears are no better attuned to Polish than Aztec, I was more struck by Tadeusz Kantor's *Dead Class*, imported from Cracow by the Richard Demarco Gallery and soon to be seen in London. The cast, a cabal of creaky waxworks in black dresses and bowlers, slump in the pews of an ancient schoolroom, guarded by a dusty beadle and surrounded by disintegrating parchment: they chatter (alas, incomprehensibly), waddle round to the lilt of a waltz, parody everyday actions, bicker, and brandish child-dummies that presumably represent themselves a millenium or so ago. The subject, clearly enough, is the ossification of the spirit. The child may be father of the man – but how does that help if a drab and paralysing society is father of the child? It makes a strangely haunting evening, the most memorable in Reekie – though *I speak as one who has spent four days* sampling roughly one-fortieth of what's on offer. There is always the chance that another *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* lurks under Castle Mound, waiting to be acclaimed. If so, it has, I fear, eluded me once again.

Let me summarise my more modest discoveries, starting, as usual, with that capital of the Fringe, the Traverse. Howard Barker's *Wax* is about a general who suddenly gets his first erection for 40 years, an event that provokes him to rape his niece and wreck the Nato exercise he's supposed to be commanding: for a less facetious sermon on the glint in the eye of authority, try *Measure for Measure*. *The Kibbo Kift* involves the Greenshirts, breakaway boy scouts who became a mass lobby for Social Credit: a fascinating subject perversely translated into a rock oratorio, scarcely the form for complicated political events and economic ideas. What next, a sung life of Mussolini called *Hairless* (or of Hitler, titled *Moustache*)? Tom McGrath's *Laurel and Hardy* is an affectionate, nicely-played biography, and Donald Campbell's *Jesuit* a rather plodding one, this time about John Ogilvie, lately canonised for a cancer cure. The author's somewhat anachronistic view is that he was a brave fanatic, less admirable than his protestant scourge, all ecumenical enlightenment in the torture-chamber.

Four by Patrick has the author of *Kennedy's Children* musing arcanely about words, writing and the failure of communication, a condition he would regard as universal but others may think more peculiar to him. The perils of creation are also the subject of David Pownall's splendidly imaginative *Music to Murder By*, which uses the ghosts of the composer Peter Warlock and of the murderer-madrigalist Gesualdo to berate those critics who fail to recognise the personal pain of the artist. Finally, let me recommend anyone hobbling in my wake to take in *The Contrast*, imported by some able pros from Rochester, New York. Back in the 1780s one Royall Tyler aspired to give America its own *School for Scandal*: hence this engaging curio, a moral (and sometimes priggish) comedy about those who have been corrupted by European manners and those who haven't. His main hate-object, obsessively invoked, was Lord Chesterfield; his intention, to keep the new nation pure and pristine. What a hope.

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Television

Ian Hamilton

Dry Eye

There was many a sodden sporran at Edinburgh Castle on Sunday night as the 'massed bands of four regiments' squelched backwards and forwards in the rain to bring us *The Edinburgh Tattoo* (BBC-1). Personally, I'd rather be tattooed than sit through the whole of one of these events (as a young child, you see, I was once forced to) but my brief inspection of this year's erect jocks wailing their way through the usual military dance routines was made particularly poignant by a programme I'd watched earlier in the week. In *This Week*'s (Thames) study of Scots drinking habits, the whistles were every bit as wet, but to a rather different, even more depressing, end.

The show opened with a battery of statistics, to convince us that the Scots really do lay into it more than anybody else, and went on to humanise these figures with shots of drunks collapsing in Sauchiehall Street and youths setting out on the rampage. Why do they do it? Well, Calvin wasn't mentioned once, and the kinds of explanation offered (poor social conditions, virility worries, and the like) could really have applied to other countries. It's surely impossible to analyse the Scot's attachment to his Scotch without probing a bit deeper than this into the national temperament, and since there has been no shortage of brooders on that dark topic, it seemed an opportunity unnecessarily foregone. Still, there were some moving individual stories, told soberly and with a marked lack of embarrassment, and no one with Scots blood could have sat to the end without feeling that maybe he ought to have a blood-test.

My 40-year-old Bank Holiday television kept giving up on me throughout last weekend's Festival 40 talk-in, *What Do You Think of it So Far?* (BBC-2), but what I did see was impressive. Frostie was in the chair, wearing that baffled but eager-to-learn look that's been off our screens for far too long, and he'd recruited a strong team of telly-thinkers to muse upon the medium's 'effects'. The Americans, Fred Friendly and Barbara Walters in particular, were far more sanguine than our lot. Friendly (can he really be called that?) cited with pride the agonising decision he'd been faced with when a news report from Vietnam depicted the Marines behaving badly; racked with patriotic doubts, he'd eventually screened it, and clearly now felt himself to be some kind of hero. 'I don't think it will be possible for a President to take our country to war, unless we are invaded, and that's the result of television.' Since the show he said this on was marking the 40th anniversary of television, one was forced to wonder why it hadn't been made less possible before. Barbara Walters, famous for her million-dollar salary, was perhaps inevitably even more enthralled by her profession: when she sees a picture of a starving child, she has emotions that 'no amount of books and newspapers' would usually bring home to her. She didn't say what the emotions were. With gush of this kind in the air, it was good to see our men – Julian Pettifer, Martin Bell and, most trenchantly, Jonathan Dimbleby – providing a measure of scepticism. They made clear that it's possible to be involved in what you do unboastfully, and without starry eyes.

Films

Martin Amis

X to Grind

From Noon Till Three *London Pavilion*

The London Pavilion was the first cinema to let me into an X film. I had tried so often, and been jeered away from so many foyers, that I suspect I was well over 16 by the time I managed to plead my way into that shadowy, illicit world of bloody fights and women's breasts. (And even then, on the way to Piccadilly in the bus, a kindly conductress offered the diminutive reviewer half-fare.) It didn't of course matter to me what the film was, so long as it was an X film, just an X film, any X film. Ever since, when I have passed the Pavilion en route to the more agreeable theatres of Leicester Square, it has gone on showing X films, just X films, any X films.

From Noon Till Three is what they now call an AA film, which generally means lots of violence and swearing but not much sex. *From Noon Till Three* has Charles Bronson in it, the pocked, Slavic superstar who only likes being in violent, tough-talking (though usually unsexy) films. *From Noon Till Three* sounded, then, like the sort of thing the Pavilion would normally be proud to screen. And yet – shorn of a 'bullshit' here, an 'erection' there, and quite bashful bouts of love-talk throughout – *From Noon Till Three* could have passed itself off as a U film to all but the most insatiably shockable.

Bronson is on his way to a bank-job when his horse breaks a leg. His friends leave him, from noon till three, at the mansion of a beautiful widow (Jill Ireland, Bronson's real-life spouse), while they go off to muff the bank-job. For those three precious hours, and for an unction-packed 40 minutes of screen time, Charles and Jill banter, fight, goof around, go to bed together, gambol topless in a brook, dress up, eat, drink, and go to bed together. Come three o'clock, Charles must rejoin the gang: he eludes a posse, lands up in jail on another charge, and is confidently assumed to be dead. Jill tells the world her story; the legend of her love, of her courage and candour, sweeps the globe. When Charles gets out of prison, he finds that his myth has outstripped his shabby reality. Not even Jill believes it is he who has returned: she is sure, for instance, that Charles was much taller and handsomer than that. Comi-tragedy ensues.

The 'lighter side' of Charles Bronson would seem to be the commodity on offer here. And what a horrible thing that side turns out to be. At no point does the film have any idea what mood it is trying to strike, and its chilling charmlesness is the result of ineptitude as much as sentimentality. Go to the Pavilion in shorts and ask for your ticket in falsetto: they might not let you in.

Weekend Competition

No 2428 **Set by T. A. Dyer**

A visitor to a Chinese nursery school heard a three-year-old denouncing Deng Ciao Ping: competitors are asked to provide a 120-word speech from a British tot denouncing any likely public figure. By 17 September.

No 2425 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

We wanted poems for improbable journals – *Exchange & Mart, Penthouse*?

Report **by Fat Jeff**

No space to laud this attractive entry: £8 Mr Hopkins, £6.50 the field.

Dltns Wkly
All I wnt is a rm smwhre,
Bdst, flt or pd à trre,
Nce kitch. and bath – wll shre –

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As lng as it's nt slvnly;
Frqunt trns – clse to shps and schls,
Bngo, pbs and swmmng pls;
No rnt, no rtes, no rles –
Oh wldn't it be lvvrly.
Oh so lvv-erly lvng abso-blmng-ltly free,
I wld nvr bdge tll bai-lffs cme and
evctd me!
All I wnt is a plce to squt,
Tht's nt askng an awfl lt;
So lndlrds wht you gt?
And why are you so lvvrly?
Lvvrly, Lvvrly.

TIM HOPKINS

Exchange and Mart

Music-tackle for band-buffs, and shackles and
handcuffs and oodles of plastic exotica;
And rubber chair-webbing and works by Krafft-
Ebing (though comics sell more than erotica);
You can buy C-Thru knickers or PVC stickers
or rare postage stamps from Rumania,
Or a rare Finnish Spitz or a gleaming Wurlitzer
(though we cater for whims even zanier);
Spiralled tusks from the narwhal might
embellish the bar-wall of a pub in Polperro
or Porlock;
Want bull's pizzles? Or tentacles? Aura
goggles or pentacles? – a *must* for the leisure-
time warlock;
Racks for wine or for stretching, a cheap
Dali etching, architectural drawings
by Gropius –
Don't look vaguely around, for they're all to
be found, and lots more, in this
mag cornucopious.

TOM DONNELLY

News of the World

Nuns in see-through habit scandal
Judge raps owners – dog 'a vandal'
Royal car collides with vicar's
Actress claims MP stole knickers
All this in today's edition
PLUS A foster mum's sedition
AND An au-pair's midnight drama
With a peeping-Tom's pyjama –
Bid to steal abortion cash –
SHOCK HORROR PROBE and MERCY DASH!

DAVID SIMPSON

Farmers Weekly

How hard the farmer's life is!
If it isn't dry it rains.
The aphis always rife is.
The back-ache always pains.
The thistle always pierces.
The nettle ever stings.
The great bull strong and fierce is.
Each year some murrain brings.

And then townees too clever
To plough, sneer, 'Feather bed!'
When we all know we'll never
Be in that till we're dead.

G. J. BLUNDELL

The Book Collector

A catalogue worth glancing through
Is Susan Spankie's Number Two,
Based on that archetypal hoard,
The Curiosa of a Lord.

I noticed there a nice *Justine*,
A trifle foxed, but binding clean,
In tanned contemporary hide
With doublures of she skin inside.

It's just the sort of thing that I,
If I had cash enough, would buy:
It is a tempting thing to see
Binding and content that agree.

PETER PETERSON

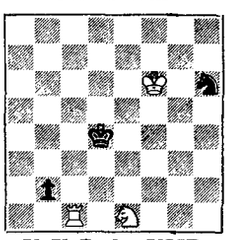
Assiac

Chess Board

No 1397 **Last Study Tourney**

Apologies to solvers for a stupendous task to be accomplished within 3 weeks. The column is to come to an end on 24 September when the solutions of the 16 awards will be published; hence entries (10 points each) must reach the office by Thursday, 23 September. The last few issues should provide sufficient space for the pre-Tourney reports and the last ladder-report. As for the quadrupled prize-fund for the award pieces those who share it will receive their vouchers. Should the cook-hunters produce a 'demolition' in the next 4 or 5 months some space will be found to announce it.

1st & 2nd ex aequo
No 13 Win



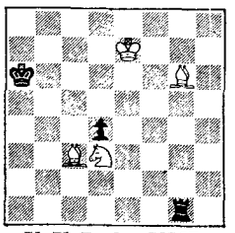
Y. V. Bazlov USSR

The Tourney provided an all-time record of 97 entries from 20 countries, as many as 41 from the USSR; other notable contributors: Sweden (8), Israel (7), Belgium & Poland (5), Czechoslovakia (4), etc.

JURY'S REPORT

The quality of the first 30 or so entries was as high as ever, though more than a dozen were anticipated or cooked. Agreeing wholeheartedly with IGCC Kasparyan we have judged by beauty, originality and technical skill, but have used no 'points scale', for as he says, art cannot be so judged. We enjoyed the task and take comfort that so many entries showed new ideas although a century and a quarter has passed since Kling & Horwitz wrote their famous book.

1st & 2nd ex aequo
No 14 Win



Y. V. Bazlov USSR

3rd Prize No 58 Win

H. Osadnik Poland

First and Second Prize (ex aequo) Nos 13 and 14. *The judges agreed that these two stood ahead of the field, both miniatures with inspired ideas and faultless construction. No 13 ends with an ideal mate; in several variations Black is cleverly trapped. In No 14 one variation echoes another about the axis of a long diagonal. The play ranging across the board shows a remarkable 'double-fork' defence of the minor pieces.*

Third Prize No 58. *A duel between the Black Rook and the White King. The King moves on a charted course preparing flight squares for future use and escaping the checks after 25 moves. A fine achievement.*

The Jury's Report on prizes 4 to 7 next week. Meanwhile, solvers and readers will wish to join me in thanking our judges David Hooper and Adam Sobey for their meticulous and sagacious labour and John Roycroft for the herculean chore of translating 97 entries into uniform typescript (numbered, not named).

Report on No. 1394 *Set 13 August*

A: 14) Bb5†ll, and both . . . ab: or . . . Qb5: leaves White with the better game.

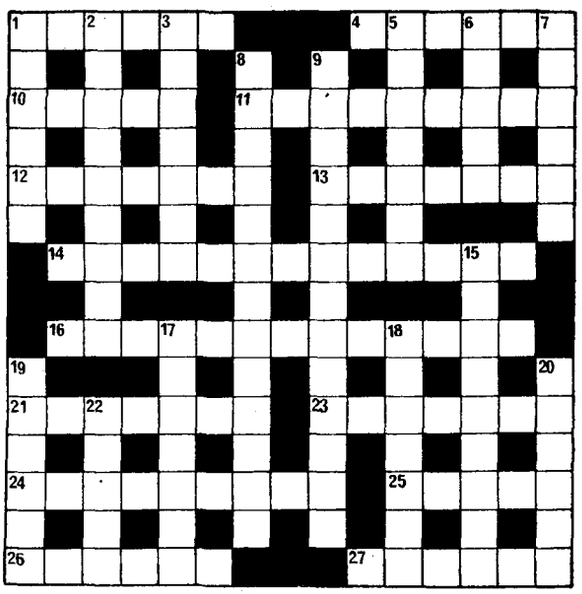
B: 1) Ktf4! Kth4:(best); **2) g4!** (gh:?? would lead to . . . Ktd3! and Black would win the P by . . . Kh5), **Ktef3: 3) g5†!,Ktg5:**; **4) Ktd6!!**, and whichever Kt moves, there'll be † on f7 or f5.

C: 1) g7,Bc4; 2) Rh2†,Kg6; 3) Rg2†,Kh7; 4) g8=Q†!,Bg8:; 5) Ra2!!,ba:; 6) Ka1, stalemating.

Prizes: C. Allen, J. Gill, R. Mylward (back after a long time), L. A. Wieseltier (newcomer from Oxford), T. G. Whitworth who found out that **C** was cooked by Chéron ages ago.

Weekend Crossword 1180

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1180, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 14 Sept.



ACROSS

1. Hinder from showing him pedestrian crossings (6).
4. She comes in threes (6).
10. Cooks for a bachelor a pet bird (5).
11. He cuts one dead (9).
12. Language which shows I loiter when returning to a mountain peak (7).
13. In this rank he divests himself of being a viceroy (7).
14. Hold back hothouse flower as a guarantee of survival (13).
16. Distant means of making the torment cooler (6, 7).
21. Helen's mother goes back with a letter for the theatre (7).
23. The Jew is timid to prevent entry (7).
24. Country which confuses a mug with a tale (9).
25. 'The portrait of a blinking ——' *(M. of V.)* (5).
26. Evaluating a hand (6).
27. Counsellor who gives people the reverse of nonsense (6).

DOWN

1. A feeder comes in most of the time to drink (6).
2. Dog which scatters pink geese (9).
3. Scorn what is carelessly said during a row (7).
5. The least speedy are second nearest the bottom (7).
6. Island where I am in and out of cover (5).
7. River which makes a river different (6).
8. Italian Carmen translated for someone in the south (5, 8).
9. Work expands to fill the time available for its completion (10, 3).
15. Expert on mountains, but the record is in nothing connected with mountain climbing (9).
17. Hear no piano medley of talented musician (7).
18. One is in an unusually steady part of Scotland (7).
19. Strike gold in a Welsh town (6).
20. He cuts figures and could make a streak (6).
22. Just when love loses its head (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1178

A	N	T	I	C	I	P	A	T	E		D	R	A	G
M		R		A		A		R			E		O
O	V	E	R	T	U	R	N	E	D		G	A	L	A
K		E		E		A		S		U		D		L
		B	R	I	G	H	T	O	N	R	O	C	K	
F		C		P		O		L		D		P		E
E	M	O	T	I	O	N		E	P	I	S	T	L	E
L		A		L				M		I		P		
L	O	C	A	L	L	Y		M	O	I	D	O	R	E
O		H		A		E		A		N		N		R
W	A	T	E	R	W	A	G	T	A	I	L			
S		R		S		R		I		S		A		A
H	A	I	R		U	N	C	L	E	H	A	R	R	Y
I		P				E		D		E		N		E
P	O	S	T		E	D	W	A	R	D	L	E	A	R

Prizewinners to No 1178

Mrs D. E. Thomas (Knutsford)
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LECTURERS

Applications for the above-mentioned positions are invited from suitably qualified persons with interests in the general area of financial accounting. Successful applicants will be encouraged to undertake research for which adequate facilities exist. It will also be possible for applicants to work towards higher degrees if desired. Appointment may be for a fixed term of three years.

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Information and application procedure available from the Academic Registrar, Monash University, Wellington Road, Clayton, Victoria 3168, Australia, or the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF. Inquiries to Professor M. S. Henderson, in the University. Closing date 31 October 1976.

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School of Sociology

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Further details and application forms (to be returned by 20 September) from Appointments Officer, Kingston Polytechnic, Penrhyn Road, Kingston upon Thames KT1 2EE. 01-549 1366.

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Application form and further information from: The General Secretary (AS), 14 - 21 Hatton Wall, London EC1N 8JP.

Closing date for return of application form: first post Thursday, 7 October 1976.

THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING Association needs an Editorial Secretary to help with the weekly Planning Bulletin & the monthly journal Town and Country Planning, & also with the pioneering Planning Aid Service which helps residents' and tenants' associations. The TCPA is a small educational charity supported by voluntary membership, and offers worthwhile work in a pleasant office. Salary: £2,200 plus, depending on experience. Apply to: The Director, TCPA, 17 Carlton House Terrace, SW1. Tel. 01-930 8903.

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or write to:
The Chairman,
Martin Luther King Centre,
Sheringham Road,
London N7 by 10 September.

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Unit for Epidemiological Studies in Psychiatry
University Department of Psychiatry, Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Morningside Park, Edinburgh, EH10 5HF.

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Details from and applications (citing two referees) to the Director by 8 October, 1976.

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The Appointments Secretary, West Midlands Arts, Lloyds Bank Chambers, Market Street, Stafford ST16 2AP. Telephone Stafford (0785) 2022/2788.

Closing date: 17 September 1976.

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NEW STATESMAN
Vol. 92 No. 2372

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Theatres

CHICHESTER. 0243 86333. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 Sept. at 7.0 'Monsieur Perrichon's Travels'; 4, 9, 11 Sept. at 2.0, 10 Sept. at 7.0 'The Circle'.

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Meetings

TUC CONGRESS: Fabian Tea meeting with Albert Booth MP. Mon., 6 Sept 5.15, Royal Albion Hotel, Old Steine, Brighton. 50p.

REINCARNATION & MEMORY. Sun. 5 Sept. 8 p.m Talk & Questions. Free. S.a.e. for programme, pamphlets, book list. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

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